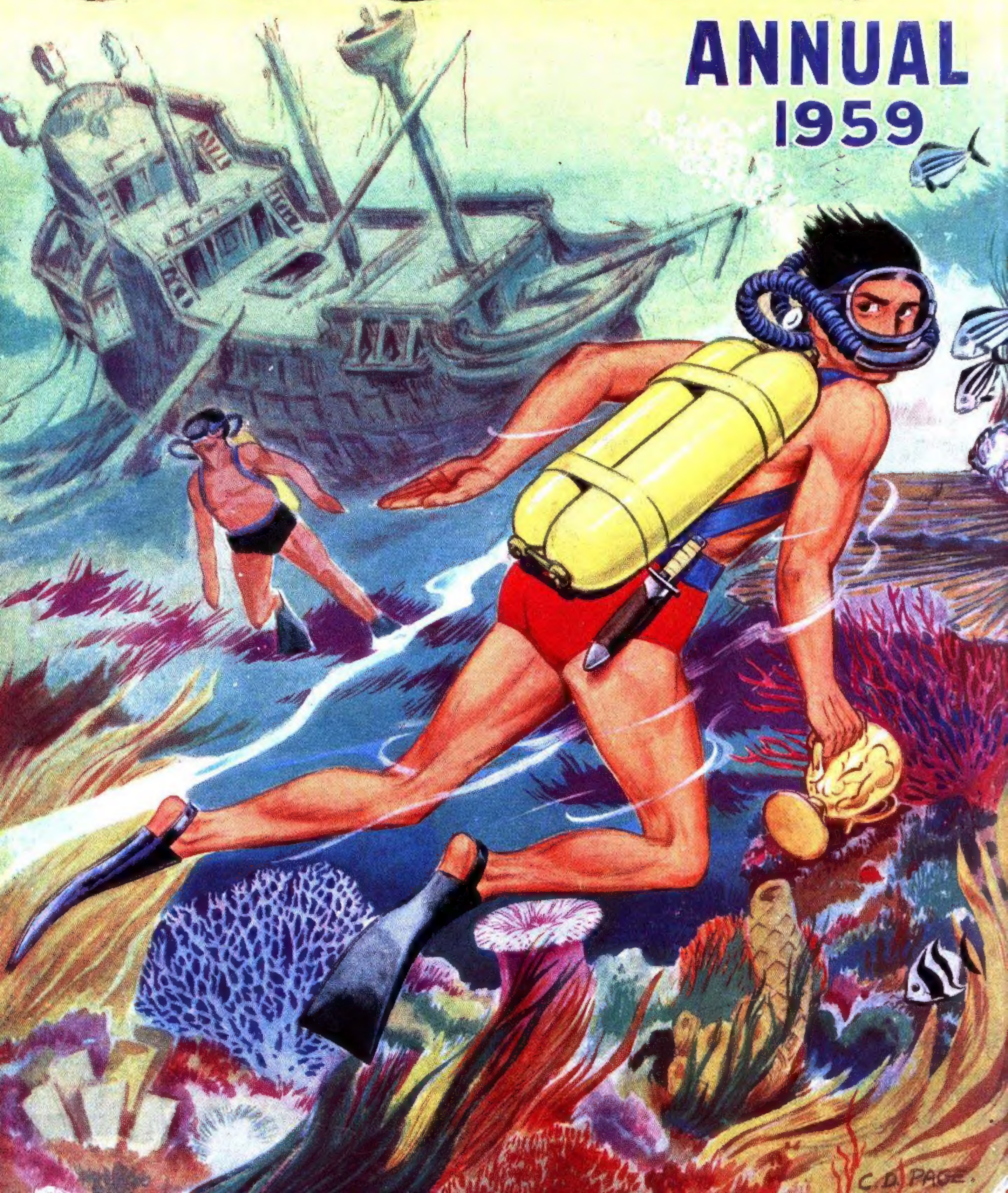


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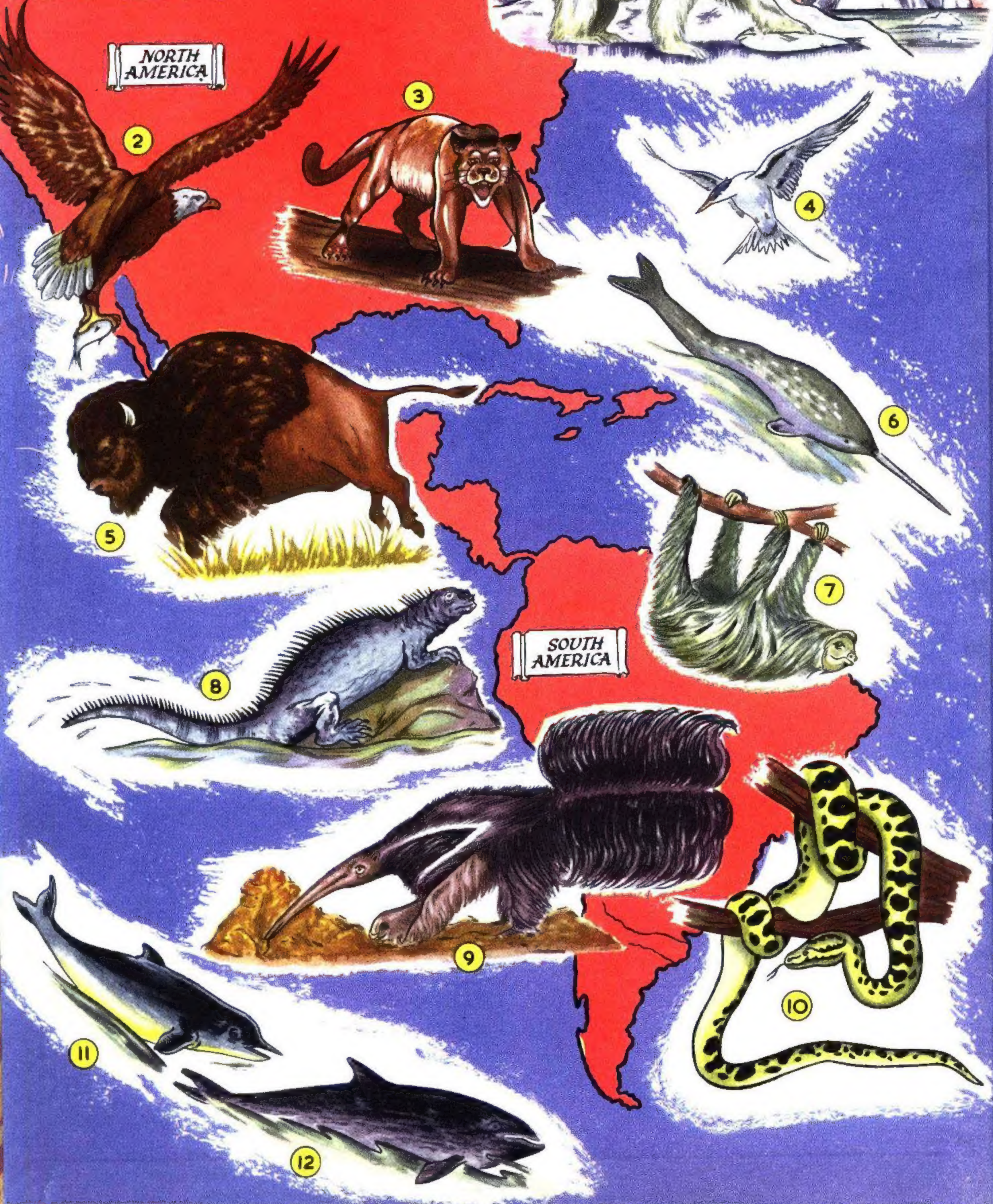


ANNUAL
1959



C. D. PAGE.

BIRDS AND BEASTS OF THIS WONDERFUL WORLD



- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. POLAR BEAR | 13. HAMMERHEAD SHARK |
| 2. WHITE-HEADED EAGLE | 14. STING-RAY |
| 3. PUMA | 15. CASSOWARY |
| 4. ARCTIC TERN | 16. KOALA BEAR |
| 5. BISON | 17. KANGAROO |
| 6. NARWHAL | 18. ALBATROSS |
| 7. SLOTH | 19. DUCK-BILLED PLATYPUS |
| 8. MARINE IGUANA | 20. GOANNA |
| 9. GIANT ANTEATER | 21. KIWI |
| 10. ANACONDA | 22. KILLER WHALES |
| 11. DOLPHIN | 23. SEA LION |
| 12. PORPOISE | |

(Turn to page 18 for interesting facts about these creatures)

PRICE
76
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LION ANNUAL

1959



Issued from
THE FLEETWAY HOUSE, FARRINGTON STREET, LONDON, E.C.4

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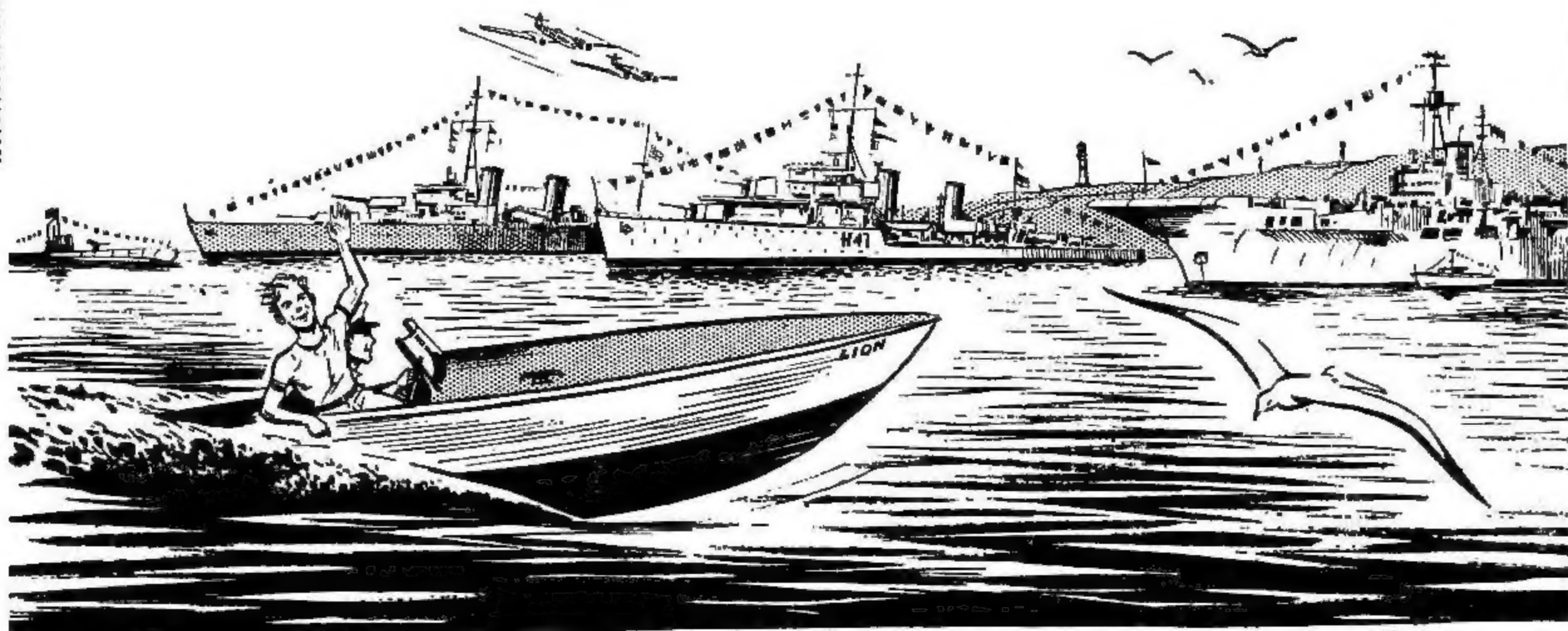
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SANDY DEAN and Co. IN SEARCH OF HIDDEN TREASURE

By
GEORGE
FORREST

SANDY DEAN AND HIS CHUMS, JACK HARDY AND OWL WATSON, WERE IN THE FOURTH FORM AT TOLLGATE SCHOOL. ONE DAY, THEY WERE CAUGHT LARKING ABOUT BY HAUGHTY HAWKINS, AN UNPOPULAR PREFECT. AS A PUNISHMENT, HE ORDERED THEM TO CLEAR OUT AN OLD LUMBER-ROOM WHICH WAS TO BE USED AS A STUDY



ALTHOUGH THEY DIDN'T RELISH THE JOB, SANDY AND CO. WORKED CHEERFULLY; AND IN LESS THAN AN HOUR THEY STAGGERED OUT WITH THE LAST PIECE OF FURNITURE

PHEW! THANK THE STARS WE'VE NEARLY FINISHED. I'M AS DRY AS A BONE

SAME HERE. AS SOON AS WE'VE DUMPED THIS DESK UPSTAIRS, I VOTE WE SLIP ACROSS TO THE TUCK-SHOP FOR A LEMON SQUASH A PIECE



HEAR, HEAR. I'M ABSOLUTELY PARCHED

IT WAS AS THEY WERE GOING UP THE STAIRS THAT HAUGHTY HAWKINS CAME ALONG

CAREFUL THERE, YOU YOUNG SWEEPS! WOE BETIDE YOU IF YOU MAKE A MARK ON THOSE BANISTERS! AND DON'T BE SO HAM-HANDED, DEAN. KEEP AN EYE ON THAT WALL — IT'S BEEN FRESHLY POLISHED



BOSSY BATES AND CO., THE FOURTH-FORM BULLIES, HAD BEEN WATCHING THE PALS WITH GLEE

HAM-HANDED, HE CALLED THEM. HE MIGHT HAVE SAID BACON-HEADED, TOO!



WAKE UP, DEAN! WHY DON'T YOU HOLD THE DESK IN YOUR TEETH?

SANDY'S ANSWER WAS TO WHIP OUT A WATER-PISTOL. HE PRESSED THE BULB, AND ---

YO-OW!



HA, HA, HA! BOSSY NEEDED A WASH!

AS THE BULLIES STREAKED FOR COVER, JACK GAVE A YELL

LOOK OUT — THE DESK'S SLIPPING!



TOO LATE. I CAN'T STOP IT!

THE DESK JOLTED AGAINST THE BANISTERS. INSTANTLY THERE WAS A SHARP CLICK — AND SOMETHING SHOT THROUGH THE AIR



THE PALS STARED IN BLANK AMAZEMENT



WELL, WHAT D'YOU KNOW! THIS IS A SECRET DRAWER!

AND A ROLL OF PARCHMENT HAS FALLEN OUT OF IT!

HIS EYES GLEAMING WITH EXCITEMENT, SANDY PICKED IT UP

PHEW! IT'S PROBABLY BEEN HIDDEN IN THAT DESK FOR DONKEY'S YEARS. AS SOON AS WE'VE FINISHED, WE'LL TAKE IT ACROSS WITH US TO THE TUCK-SHOP AND HAVE A PROPER DEKKO AT IT. YOU NEVER KNOW — IT MIGHT BE JOLLY IMPORTANT!

AND IN THE TUCK-SHOP, A LITTLE WHILE LATER ---



THESE WORDS ON IT ARE WRITTEN IN OLD ENGLISH. IT'S A KIND OF RHYME. CAN YOU MAKE OUT WHAT IT SAYS?

SANDY HELD THE FADED WRITING TO THE LIGHT ---

From where sparkling waters upward flow, pace ye ten tiwards ye oak tallest against Tollgate's skies. East-wards turn and measure fifty yards, then in ye floor o'er fifth arch my secret lies.

DON'T YOU SEE? IT'S A RHYMING CLUE TO SOMETHING VALUABLE THAT WAS HIDDEN CENTURIES AGO!

MAYBE BURIED TREASURE! BY JINGO — BOSSY AND CO. DID US A GOOD TURN WHEN THEY CAUSED THAT DESK TO SLIP



LET'S FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS STRAIGHT AWAY AND SEE WHAT THEY LEAD TO!

THE PALS HURRIED FROM THE TUCK-SHOP --- LITTLE KNOWING THAT BOSSY AND CO. HAD BEEN LISTENING BEHIND A SCREEN



I SAY — I RECKON THOSE CLOTS ARE ON TO A GOOD THING

SO DO I! BUT WE'RE NOT GOING TO BE LEFT OUT OF IT. IN FACT, IF WE'RE SMART WE OUGHT TO BE ABLE TO NIP IN AHEAD OF 'EM AND GET THE TREASURE FOR OURSELVES. COME ON — WE'LL KEEP WATCH ON THEM!

UNAWARE THAT BOSSY AND CO. WERE SPYING FROM BEHIND A BUSH, SANDY, JACK AND OWL BEGAN TO WORK OUT THE CLUES ON THE PARCHMENT

THE FOUNTAIN! THAT'S WHAT THE OLD RHYME MUST MEAN BY "SPARKLING WATERS UPWARD FLOW"

AND THERE'S THE TALLEST OAK!

WE TAKE TEN PACES TOWARDS THAT

NOW, ACCORDING TO MY COMPASS, WE'RE FACING EAST

AND I'LL MEASURE OUT 50 YARDS WITH THIS BALL OF STRING. IT'S JUST THE RIGHT LENGTH

SANDY CAME TO A HALT BENEATH THE CLOISTERS

OKAY, JACK — WE'RE HOT ON THE SCENT!

BY JINGO — THIS IS A REAL THRILL! THERE'S THE FIFTH ARCH

THEN THE TREASURE'S HIDDEN IN THE FLOOR OF THE ROOM IMMEDIATELY ABOVE IT. WHOSE ROOM IS IT?

GOSH! DON'T YOU RECOGNISE IT? IT'S HAUGHTY HAWKINS' STUDY!

SANDY AND CO. GAZED AT EACH OTHER WITH DISMAY

OF ALL THE ROTTEN SWIZZES!

HAUGHTY — THE WORST PREFECT AT TOLLGATE! HE'D NEVER LET US SEARCH HIS ROOM

EVEN IF WE SHOWED HIM THE PARCHMENT, HE'D THINK IT WAS A LEG-PULL — AND PROBABLY GIVE US A CLOUT. WE DON'T KNOW FOR SURE, OF COURSE, THAT IT REFERS TO TREASURE. BUT MY GUESS IS THAT IT DOES. SO SOMEHOW WE'VE TO GET INTO HIS STUDY — IN SECRET!

AT THAT INSTANT, THE CLASS BELL SOUNDED

WE'LL HAVE TO PACK UP FOR THE TIME BEING. WE'VE THREE PERIODS OF CHEMISTRY NOW — AND AS THE MASTER IS ILL, HAUGHTY IS TAKING US — WORSE LUCK!

BOSSY AND HIS SNOOPING CRONIES FOLLOWED THOUGHTFULLY

I SAW SANDY DEAN MAKING NOTES ON THAT ROLL OF PARCHMENT. I SHOULDN'T BE SURPRISED IF HE'S INDICATED ON IT THE SPOT WHERE THE TREASURE IS TO BE FOUND

THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I THOUGHT, SPIDER. SO WHAT WE'VE TO DO IS TO PINCH THE PARCHMENT AND GET TO THE HIDING-PLACE AHEAD OF HIM. LEAVE IT TO ME. I'LL FIX IT!

A SHORT TIME LATER, SANDY AND HIS CHUMS WERE BUSY IN THE SCHOOL LABORATORY

GOLLY — DOESN'T THIS STUFF NIFF! IT SMELLS LIKE BAD EGGS!

THAT'S NOT SURPRISING — IT'S THE SOLUTION THEY PUT INTO STINK-BOMBS

PIPE DOWN, YOU TWO. HAUGHTY'S GOT HIS EYE ON US!

STRAIGHT AWAY HAUGHTY'S HARSH VOICE RANG OUT

DEAN! HARDY! TAKE 50 LINES FOR TALKING! I'LL DOUBLE IT IF I CATCH YOU AGAIN!

THERE YOU ARE — I WARNED YOU!

MEANWHILE, BOSSY HAD WORKED OUT A CUNNING PLAN TO GET HOLD OF THE PARCHMENT. IN AN UNDERTONE HE SPOKE TO ONE OF HIS TOADIES

NOW'S YOUR CHANCE! POT DEAN GOOD AND HARD WITH A PELLET. I'LL SEE TO THE REST

A PELLET OF FILTER-PAPER FLEW THROUGH THE AIR AND CAUGHT SANDY ON THE CHEEK WITH STINGING FORCE

YEOW!

FURIOUSLY HE DARTED ACROSS TO THE CULPRIT

IT WAS YOU, YOU LITTLE SQUIRT! GIVE ME THAT ----!

HEY, STEADY!

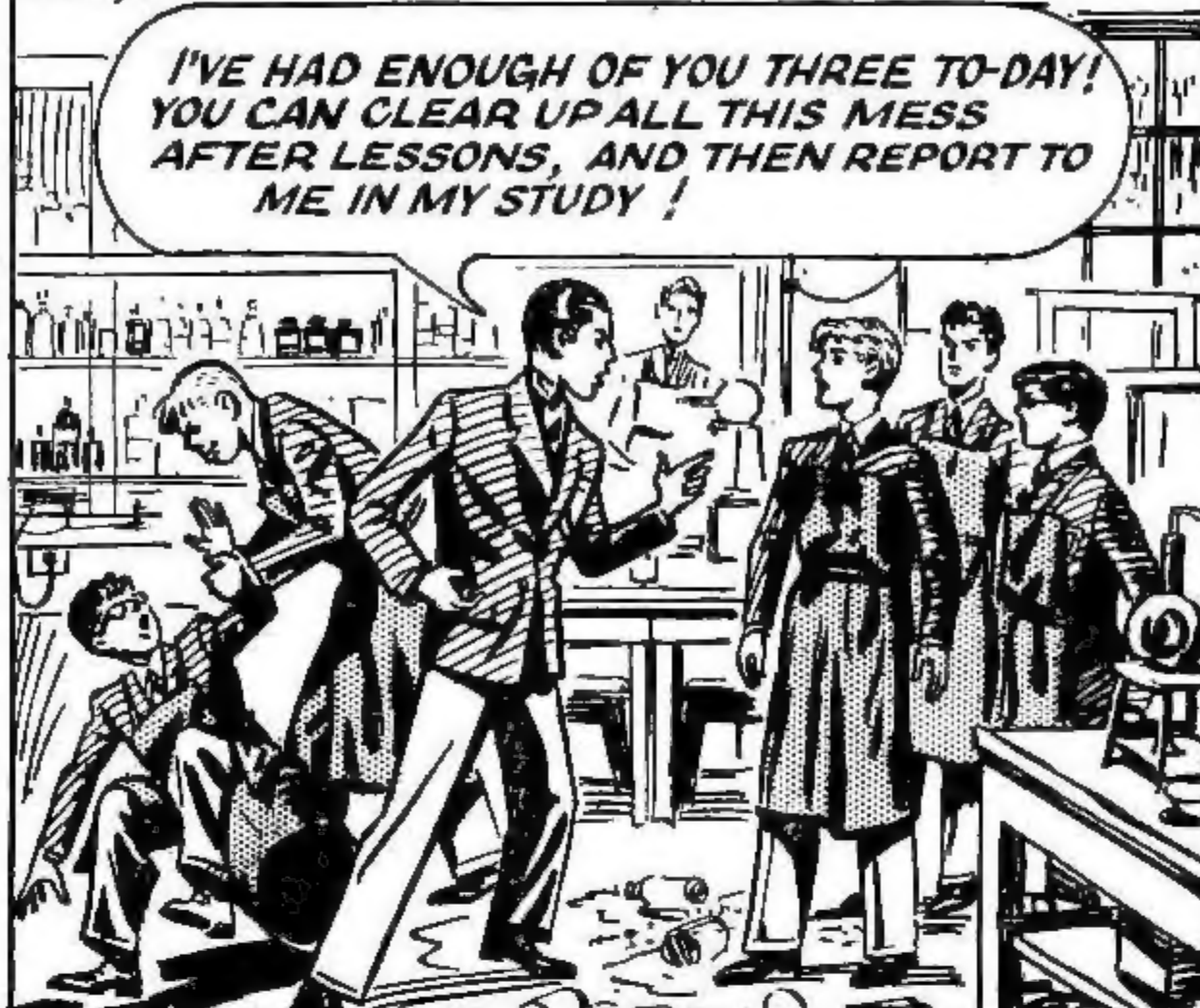
IN THE COMMOTION BOSSY'S HAND DARTED UNSEEN TO SANDY'S POCKET AND WHIPPED OUT THE ROLL OF PARCHMENT

GOT IT!

JACK AND OWL RUSHED FORWARD TO DRAG THEIR PAL BACK



THE PREFECT WAS ONLY TOO PLEASED TO BLAME JACK AND OWL, TOO



AND WHEN CLASSES WERE OVER ---



ALL AT ONCE, SANDY BEGAN TO CHUCKLE



WHEN SANDY HAD EXPLAINED, THE TRIO HURRIED TO HAUGHTY'S STUDY. THEY BURST INSIDE, PUFFING AND PANTING



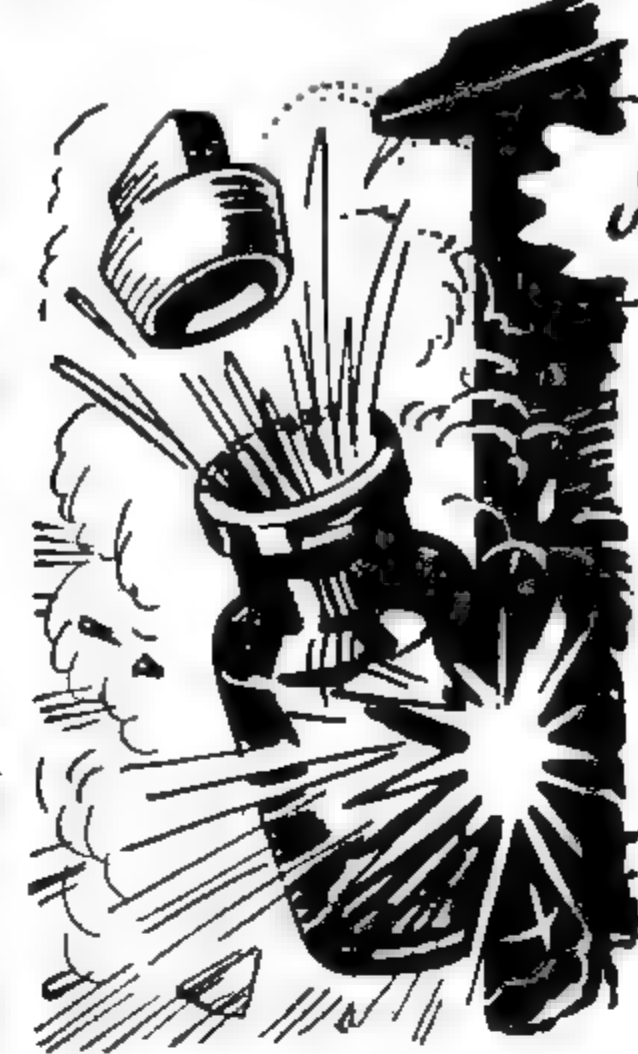
HAUGHTY WHIPPED UP A CANE



TURNING TO LEAVE, SANDY SEEMED TO TRIP ACCIDENTALLY, AND THE FLASK OF STINK-BOMB SOLUTION SHOT FROM HIS HAND



THE FLASK HIT THE TABLE AND BROKE



AS THE SOLUTION VAPORISED — A SMELL LIKE THAT OF ROTTEN EGGS FILLED THE ROOM



HAUGHTY COUGHED AND SPLUTTERED



YOU CLUMSY IDIOT, DEAN! THE THREE OF YOU CAN — UGH — GET MOPS AND PAILS AND SCRUB THE WHOLE STUDY CLEAN! I'LL TEACH YOU! FETCH ME FROM THE COMMON-ROOM WHEN NOT A WHIFF REMAINS

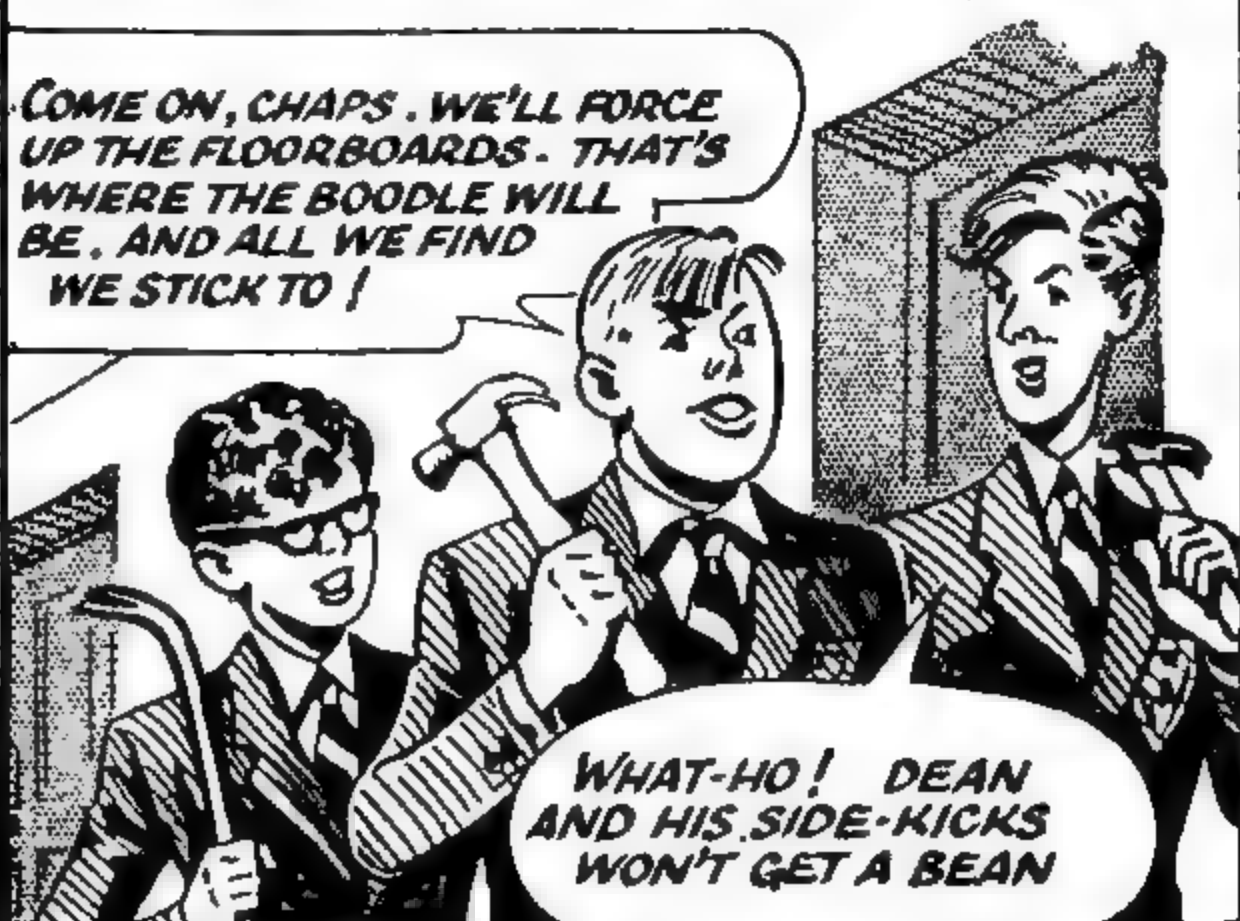
AS HAUGHTY WENT ONE WAY, THE THREE PALS WENT THE OTHER



ALL WE'VE TO DO NOW IS TO FETCH THE CLEANING KIT FROM THE JANITOR'S ROOM. WHILE WE'RE CLEANING UP THE MESS — AND HAUGHTY IS AWAY — WE CAN MAKE A THOROUGH SEARCH FOR THE TREASURE!

UNBEKNOWN TO SANDY AND CO., BOSSY BATES AND HIS TOADIES HAD BEEN WAITING THEIR CHANCE. HAVING STUDIED THE PARCHMENT, THEY FELT CONVINCED THAT A FORTUNE AWAITED THEM IN THE PREFECT'S STUDY

COME ON, CHAPS. WE'LL FORCE UP THE FLOORBOARDS. THAT'S WHERE THE BOODLE WILL BE. AND ALL WE FIND WE STICK TO!



WHAT-HO! DEAN AND HIS SIDE-KICKS WON'T GET A BEAN

THE BULLIES WERE HARD AT WORK WHEN THE PALS RETURNED



WHY, THE CRAFTY COKE-HEADS! THEY MEAN TO COLLAR THE TREASURE!

WE'LL SOON PUT A STOP TO THEIR LITTLE GAME! WE WERE TOLD TO CLEAN OUT THE STUDY, SO WE WILL! AND WE'LL CLEAN THEM OUT TOO!



THEN SANDY AND CO. WENT INTO ACTION



SWEEP OUT ALL RUBBISH!

MOP 'EM UP!

YOW! STOP! I'LL SPIFLICATE YOU! YAAAAAH!

PANDEMONIUM FOLLOWED



HEY — THAT'S OUR SOAP YOU'VE TRODDEN ON, SPIDER!

DON'T FALL ON ME, YOU FOOL! OOOCH!

OOOOOF!

CLEANERS, ADVAAANCE!



FANCY THEM HAVING A WASH IN HERE!

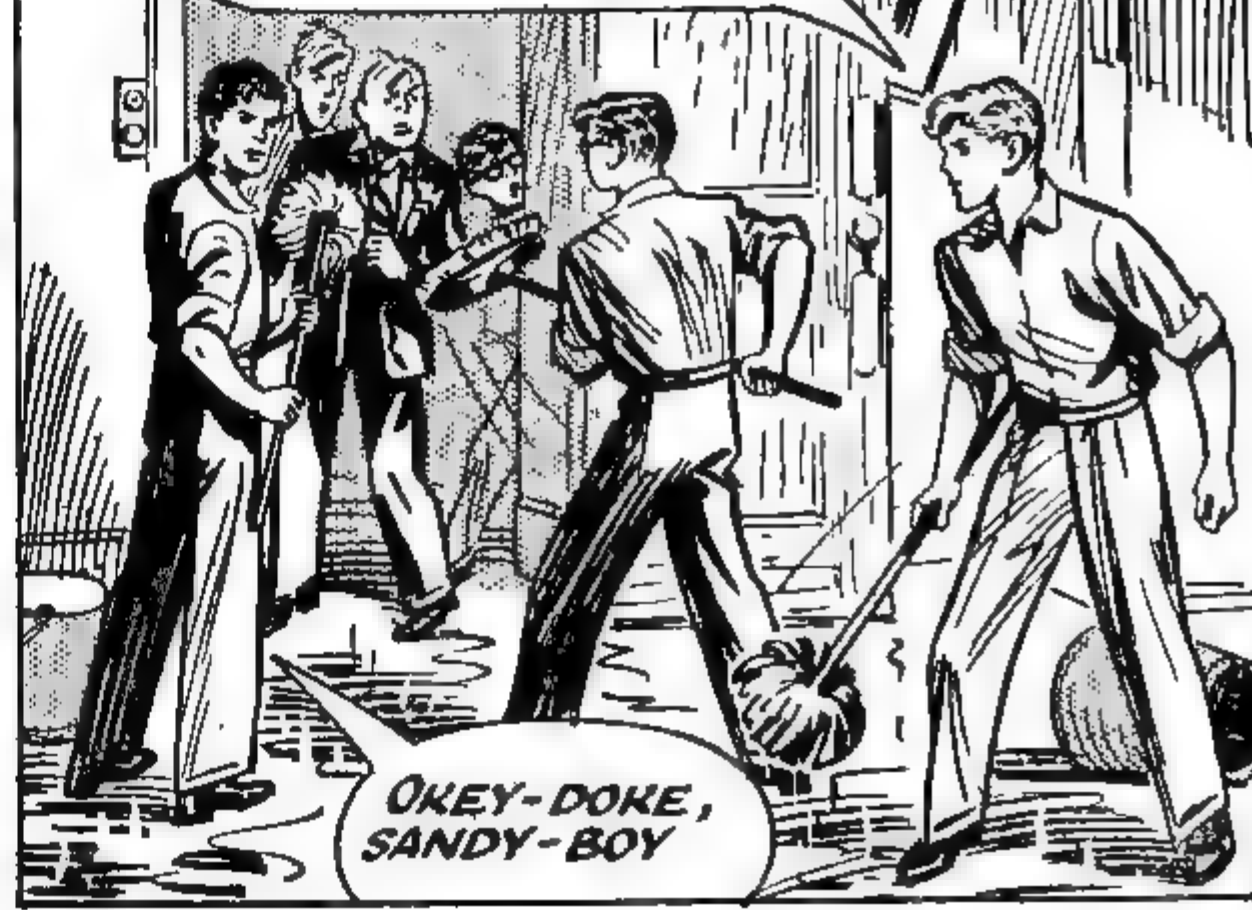
INCH BY INCH BOSSY AND CO. WERE FORCED BACK



YOU WON'T KEEP US OUT, WE KNOW YOU'RE AFTER HIDDEN TREASURE — BUT IT'S US WHO ARE GOING TO GET IT!

THAT'S WHAT YOU THINK!

KEEP THEM AT BAY, CHAPS. I'LL SEARCH UNDER THE FLOORBOARDS WHILE YOU HOLD THEM OFF



OKEY-DOKE, SANDY-BOY

THE COMMOTION, HOWEVER, HAD BEEN HEARD BY HAUGHTY— AND THE HEADMASTER. BOTH NOW CAME HURRYING UP TO INVESTIGATE.

HAWKINS, ISN'T THAT YOUR STUDY? WHAT ON EARTH'S GOING ON?

SIR, I LEFT DEAN AND HIS FRIENDS CLEANING IT OUT. WHY, THEY'RE WRECKING IT! THEY NEED A SEVERE LESSON! I'VE HAD NOTHING BUT TROUBLE FROM THEM ALL DAY

GLIMPING THE HEAD'S APPROACH, JACK YELLED A WARNING

SANDY!
THE HEAD'S COMING WITH HAUGHTY!
HURRY!
HURRY!

JEEPERS, THAT'S TORN IT! AND I STILL HAVEN'T FOUND ANYTHING YET!

JACK AND OWL FELT THEIR HEARTS SINK

MEANWHILE, SANDY GROPED DESPERATELY UNDER THE FLOORBOARDS---

AND THEN THE HEAD'S VOICE THUNDERED OUT

WE'RE FOR IT— WITH A VENGEANCE. TRYING TO EXPLAIN TO HAUGHTY WOULD BE BAD ENOUGH. BUT AS FOR THE HEAD—!!

I'LL TRY TO REACH A BIT FURTHER. BUT IF THERE'S NOTHING HERE, WE'LL BE FOR THE HIGH JUMP!

STOP! HOW DARE YOU! STAND ASIDE!

BUT EVEN AS THE HEAD STRODE INTO THE STUDY, SANDY'S FINGERS CLOSED OVER SOMETHING HEAVY AND HARD

ONE FINAL HEAVE, AND AN OBJECT— GLINTING DULLY OF GOLD— CAME INTO VIEW---

SIR! I— I'VE FOUND WHAT I WAS SEARCHING FOR! I'M DRAGGING IT OUT!

SIR, HERE IT IS! I THINK IT'S A CREST!

THE HEAD'S EXPRESSION OF ANGER VANISHED

GOOD GRACIOUS! WHY, DEAN, IT'S TOLLGATE'S ORIGINAL CREST — THE ONE MENTIONED AS MISSING IN OUR HISTORICAL RECORDS! THERE'S NO DOUBT ABOUT IT! IT WAS THOUGHT TO HAVE BEEN STOLEN BY CROMWELL'S FORCES WHEN THEY BESIEGED THE ROYALISTS WHO WERE HOLDING THIS SCHOOL. THIS IS WONDERFUL!



RECOVERING THE PARCHMENT FROM BOSSY, SANDY EXPLAINED THE WHOLE STORY

SIR, I'M VERY SORRY WE DIDN'T ASK FOR PERMISSION TO SEARCH — BUT, WELL, WE WERE AFRAID HAWKINS MIGHT THINK IT A HOAX. AND WE DID WANT TO FIND IT OURSELVES, SIR, SO ---



SAY NO MORE, DEAN. IF YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS HAVE GOT INTO TROUBLE, I THINK THIS DISCOVERY MORE THAN PUTS MATTERS RIGHT. THE CREST IS OF SOLID GOLD — AND OF THE GREATEST HISTORICAL VALUE, TOO. BUT FOR YOUR INITIATIVE IT MIGHT NEVER HAVE BEEN FOUND

AND THE FOLLOWING WEEK, WHEN FOUNDERS' DAY WAS CELEBRATED AT TOLLGATE, SANDY, JACK AND OWL WERE CALLED UP TO THE PLATFORM TO RECEIVE THE CONGRATULATIONS OF THE GOVERNORS

THANKS TO YOU THREE BOYS, WE HAVE OUR ORIGINAL CREST BACK IN ITS RIGHTFUL PLACE OF HONOUR. ON BEHALF OF TOLLGATE I ASK YOU TO ACCEPT A REWARD OF FIVE POUNDS EACH



THREE CHEERS FOR TOLLGATE'S TREASURE-HUNTERS!

AND THE ONLY ONES WHO DIDN'T CHEER WERE BOSSY BATES AND CO. — AND HAUGHTY HAWKINS!

HURRAH!
HURRAH!
HURRAH!

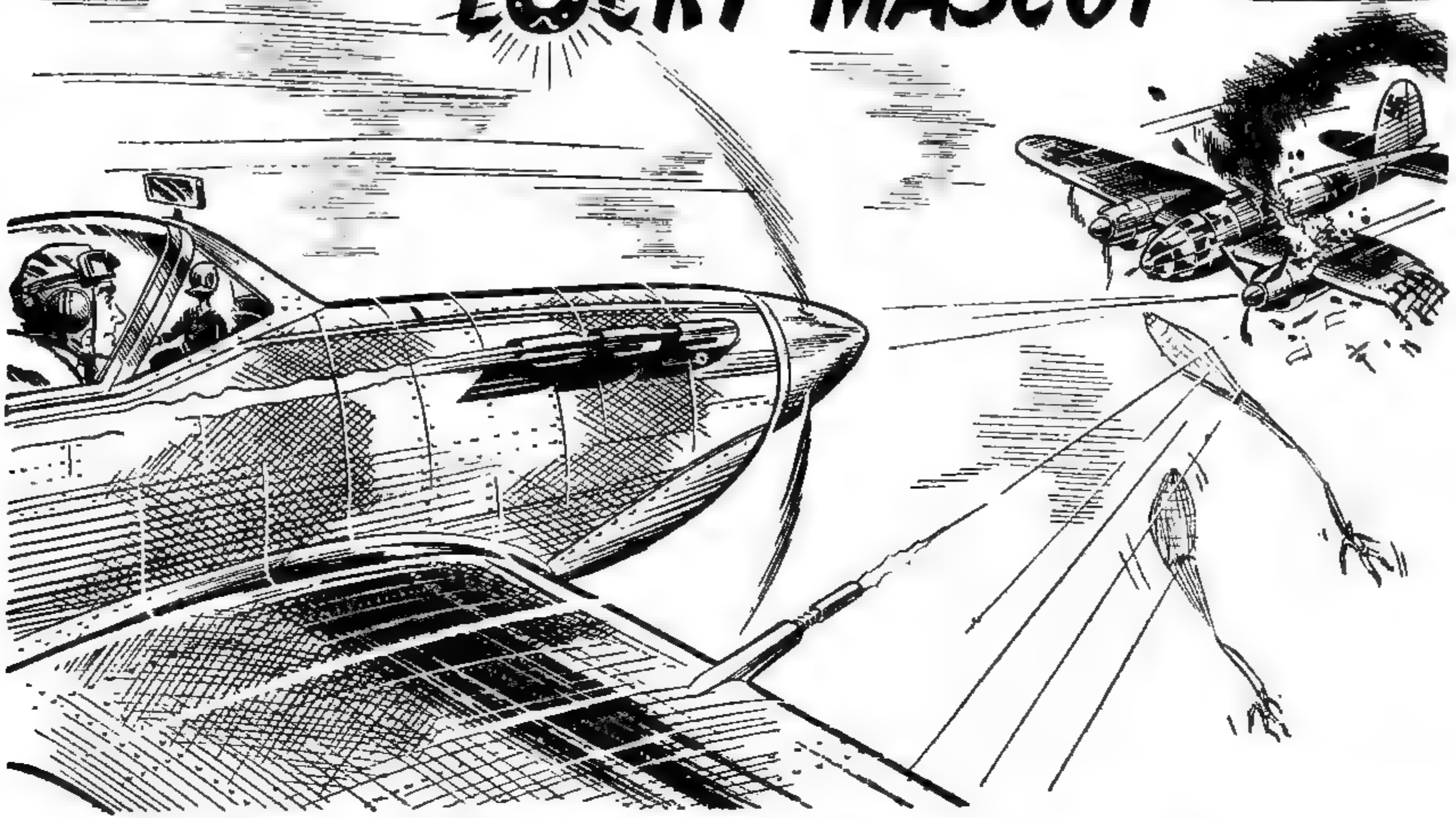


THE END

PADDY PAYNE'S

LUCKY MASCOT

BY
MARK ROSS



"TALLY-HO!"

"**H**UNTING a Heinkel, hunting a Heinkel,
Who'll come a'hunting a Heinkel with
me? . . ."

The roar of voices in jubilant unison echoed boisterously from the Officers' Mess of Foxton R.A.F. Station, one of the most renowned combat units in the whole of R.A.F. Fighter Command.

It was the summer of 1940, and the Battle of Britain was at its height. A handful of young, devil-may-care pilots, like these "Foxton Furies," were daily riding the skies above Britain, pitting their sleek Spitfires in an all-out battle with the mighty air fleets the Nazis hurled repeatedly at our shores.

But now, between their trips into the cold, blue arena high above, the Spitfire pilots were snatching a few well-earned minutes of cheery relaxation.

In the centre of the laughing, joke-swapping crew was a tall, muscular Squadron-Leader, his pilot's "Wings" riding proudly above two rows of medal ribbons: Paddy Payne, the Squadron's top-scoring fighter ace. And right at this minute the famous Spitfire pilot was—doing a dance with a duck!

The duck was Oswald, a small, rubbery toy, and

Paddy's precious mascot. No one could quite remember how, or when, it had come into Paddy's possession, or a time when he hadn't had it to take with him on his daring sorties. Now, to shouts of laughter, Paddy Payne was doing a whirlwind Irish jig, holding Oswald at arm's length above his head, and squeezing the duck so that it emitted plaintive quacks in time to the tune!

"Hunting a Heinkel *quack*, hunting a Heinkel *quack*,

Who'll come a'hunting *quack* a Heinkel *quack*
with me *quack quack*!"

As the dance finished—to wild applause—Paddy's flight partner, Flying Officer Dick Smith, gave the toy duck an affectionate pat on the beak.

"Good old Oswald, I bet Paddy wouldn't ever dream of taking off without you," he chuckled.

"You bet your sweet life I wouldn't, chum," Paddy grinned. "Why, Oswald's almost human. He's flown with me on every trip I've made since I joined you bunch of sky-commandoes. If it hadn't been for Oswald falling against the fuel gauge that time over Cherbourg, I'd never have noticed that I was darned nearly out of gas, and I wouldn't be here today!"

Suddenly a Pilot Officer made a grab for the duck,

The Rubber Duck that Helped a Fighter-Pilot in the Battle of Britain!

and, dipping it into a flower vase on the piano, caused Oswald to suck up some of the stale water through his beak.

"Gee, if Oswald's nearly human I guess he'd like a drink, eh Skipper?" he smiled. "I reckon . . ."

But he got no further. In a flash, the laughing Paddy had snatched his mascot back again, and, with a gentle squeeze, sent a stream of water straight at the other.

The pals yelled with mirth, as the spluttering flyer ducked wildly.

"Whacko for Ossie—he sure shot Mac down in flames!"

"In *water*, you mean, chum!"

"You'd better bale out, Jock—at this rate you'll soon be in the drink!"

Then, just as Paddy was re-filling Oswald in readiness for another "run-in," every loudspeaker on the 'drome burst into sudden sound.

"Squadron scramble. Raiders approaching. Get to it!"

Within seconds the Mess was cleared, and the flyers were dashing madly for their waiting planes.

Clutching Oswald under his arm, Paddy raced towards his gleaming Spitfire. Standing by the flight-line, its engine was already ticking over. His mechanic held back the canopy, and Paddy leapt in.

"Good luck, sir. Give 'em heck!"

A group of mechanics and fitters stood behind, watching the planes snarling off into the skies like avenging hornets. Admiringly they saw Paddy wave his chocks away, rev his engine, and send his Spitfire swooping across the turf for a hurtling take-off.

"Paddy Payne'll give the Nazis a hot reception!" yelled one.

"Watch out, Luftwaffe—here come the "Foxton Furies" in tip-top fighting trim!" shouted another.

But, in the excitement, no one noticed a man dressed as a Corporal, who, although seeming to join in the general bustle, looked on with eyes of hate! He was a Nazi saboteur in disguise, and he peered after the departing planes with something close approaching a snarl.

"They think Payne's due to add to his score, do they?" he gritted. "The fools! They're in for a surprise—and so is he!"

High above the 'drome, unaware of this secret menace and climbing steadily, the Squadron were angled skywards, all set to intercept the enemy planes. Ground Control's instructions crackled urgently in Paddy's headphones. "Base to Leader, Base to Leader. Vector 125. Bandits approaching 18,000 feet. Find and engage. Good luck!"

Masterfully coaxing every scrap of power out of his plane, Paddy edged the Spitfire round until his compass needle floated opposite the 125 mark, 19,000 feet. 19,500. 20,000 feet. Eyes strained, hands tightened. Where were the devils?

Suddenly Dick's voice came ringing over the Intercomm.

"There they are, Paddy. Down to the right, look! Wow—it's a mob of Heinkels—a dirty great pack of 'em!"

One swift glance was enough to confirm Dick's quick spotting. There, away to starboard, partly hidden by fleecy white clouds, were the Nazi bombers—heading straight towards London.

Paddy gave Oswald, who was perched in front of him, an affectionate pat on the head.

"Here goes, old pal," he said under his breath, and then rapped over the R-T: "Tally Ho! Bandits to starboard. Attack, attack! Lam into 'em, men!"

Peeling off, with deadly grace, Paddy took his plane down in a screaming, arcing dive, closing rapidly with the bombers below. Then, as the leader came swinging into his deflector sight, Paddy's finger clicked the control-column gun button to "Fire." His thumb tightened.

Rat-tat-tat-tat-tat!

A chattering stream of bullets reached out ahead of the Spitfire and smacked into the leading Heinkel. Paddy had a fleeting glimpse of daylight through the shattered Nazi fuselage. The next instant, with a shattering explosion, the bomber disintegrated in mid-air, in a fiery ball of flames and smoke. Small pieces of the fuselage spun away, down, down towards the English Channel far below.

"Great guns—nice shooting, Skipper! You must've sent his bomb-load sky-high!"

Dick's voice rattled excitedly over the ether.

But now the Heinkels' gunners were opening up, sending out a curtain of death-dealing lead towards the Spitfires that zoomed in to the attack. Yet already four bombers had broken formation, and were veering out of control, smoke pouring from the wounds the Spitfires' guns had inflicted on them.

With a whoop, Paddy swung his plane over on one wing, and whirled back towards the remaining Heinkel. But, as he did so, some sixth sense made him look up—just in the nick of time!

For, out of the sun, were swooping a squadron of Messerschmitts. The bombers' fighter-protection had bided its time, and was now coming to the big planes' aid!

"Watch it! M.E. cover!" Paddy yelled, twisting his plane furiously out of range of one Messerschmitt, that came bulleting towards him. From the corner of his eye he saw its tracers carving harmlessly through space, fifty yards from his port wing-tip.

But, within seconds, the dog-fight was on—in deadly earnest.

Nazi and British planes whirled and turned in a wild aerial dance, to the grim tune of thundering machine guns and straining engines.

Snaking round in a turn so tight it seemed about to press him through the very floor of his Spitfire, Paddy carefully lined up a stray Nazi fighter in his sights. He increased speed, moving in to point-blank range.

The enemy pilot turned, eyes wide—but too late. One burst from Paddy was enough. A black streamer of smoke spun out behind the Messerschmitt, and slowly it turned on its back, before spinning away on its dread journey to oblivion far below.

The ace fighter-pilot had notched up his score by two, in as many minutes. And the rest of the Squadron were having a field day as well. Three more Nazi planes were spiralling earthwards!

Then the Nazis had had enough.

Suddenly, in one of those amazing battle-changes, which are the hall-mark of war in the air, both enemy bombers and fighter planes veered round, and headed back towards the distant coastline of occupied France.

Paddy rapped commands into his face-mike.

"They're breaking it off boys. Let 'em go. We'll save our bullets for the next show! Make tracks for home . . ."

Then, at the instant Paddy swung his machine northwards, a sudden violent explosion jolted his plane, as if it had been hit by a giant hammer. Bucketing wildly the Spitfire slewed sideways. Paddy glanced instantly backwards. With a gasp, he saw a great gap had been blasted in his fuselage, a gap the size of a sack of potatoes. But there were no M.E.'s within shooting distance! Completely mystified, Paddy fought to steady the juddering aircraft, and at last managed to bring her to an even keel.

Mind acting with lightning precision, Paddy took stock of his situation.

Below was the cold sea. Eleven, perhaps twelve miles away, was Foxton, his home airfield.

His kite was darned nearly in two pieces; one bad air pocket, and as likely as not the tailplane would fall clean off. Questions raced through his mind. Should he put her down in the water, or try to get her home?

In an instant he'd decided. A Spitfire's spare parts were precious. It was Foxton, or bust!

Throttling right back, he flipped his R-T button to tell his boys the news, but there was no response from his set. The batteries must have been disconnected by the explosion. But, as he set his plane gliding down towards the far-away Squadron airfield, another Spitfire sped alongside. The pilot gave a cheery thumbs-up. It was Dick!

He was escorting his leader back to base. At least Paddy wouldn't now fall foul of any lone Nazi sneak raiders on the long journey home.

Skilfully Paddy nursed the stricken plane downwards, barely moving the controls at all. Merely a gentle action on the ailerons kept the aircraft heading for its destination. Down and down they went, the two Spitfires together. Soon the houses were beginning to take shape, and now people could be seen, their faces staring upwards at the aerial partners, coupled in the blue above!

Another two miles to go! Now one mile! Now he was down to 500 feet! The boundary fence seemed to race towards him—he was too low. Scarcely daring to breathe, Paddy pulled back on the stick, to keep the nose up. Would she stall? For a second the gallant plane responded, and then the last few struts and spars gave way, under the strain of the manoeuvre. With a terrible rending tear the tailplane fell clean off!

CRASH LANDING

CRUNNNNNCH!

The plane flopped to the ground like a dying bird, skidded fifty yards across grass and runways in a gathering cloud of dirt and dust, and ploughed itself to a standstill in mid-field. The next second it burst into flames!

Dazed but unhurt, Paddy flicked his safety belt undone, and flung back the canopy. The wings were blazing, but there was still plenty of room to jump clear.

Then, just as he was about to make his leap from the fiery plane, he caught sight of Oswald, his duck mascot, lying on his side on the floor of the aircraft.

He bent down to grab him. In the same instant, what seemed like a thousand firecrackers crackled above his head, splintering the windscreen and the canopy into a myriad pieces. The machine gun bullets had exploded in the heat of the fire, and, if Paddy hadn't been crouching in the cockpit, he would have fallen victim to his own ammunition!

Grabbing the toy duck, Paddy flung himself from the plane, just as the crash wagons and fire trucks came racing on to the scene. In a trice asbestos-suited men moved in on the blazing plane with fire-extinguishers.

Still clutching Oswald, Paddy looked on grimly.

At that moment, Dick, who'd landed almost alongside, dashed up to his pal, eyes wide with concern. But, on seeing Paddy, concern turned to joy.

"Good to see you're O.K., Skip," he grinned.

"It'd take more than a prang to put paid to your old pal Paddy," the Squadron-Leader replied. "But if it hadn't been for Oswald I'd have been a goner, that's for sure. C'mon—let's get out of here. There's nothing more we can do."

And so the flying pals pushed their way through the racing airmen, and made their way back to their quarters.

It wasn't long before Paddy had got himself a fresh battledress, and cleaned off most of the grime of battle.

"Some scrap," he said, as he straightened his tie in the mirror of the billet he shared with Dick. "We sure gave those Nazis a pasting. I reckon that bomber outfit will think twice before ever trying to cross the English coastline again. But right now there's something else I'd like to know . . ."

He paused.

Both he and Dick were thinking the same thought.

"... What the heck was it that blew that hole in my ship?" he continued, quietly. "Could it have been some sort of delayed action shell those Messerschmitts are using?"

Dick didn't reply.

"Then if it wasn't, there's only one thing which could have caused it, Dick. Sabotage! And there's only one way too, of finding out for sure. Before joining the lads, we'll have a dekko at the wreck, and see for ourselves."

Grim-lipped, Paddy and Dick walked out towards the flight-huts. The pranged Spitfire had been brought in by the crash-trucks, and was lying in a twisted heap alongside one of the maintenance hangars. Paddy was carrying Oswald, almost absent-mindedly.

Paddy clambered up over the blackened struts of what remained of a wing, and bent down to inspect

the place where the mysterious "shell" had almost succeeded in doing what the Nazi Air Force had failed to do—settle for Paddy Payne.

The Squadron-Leader rummaged among the ends of the broken spars there. Dick watched intently.

Suddenly Paddy stiffened. His keen eyes had spotted something lying inside the body of the fuselage. Putting Oswald down on one of the aircraft's wheels, he stretched inside the plane's body. Dick craned to see what he was after.

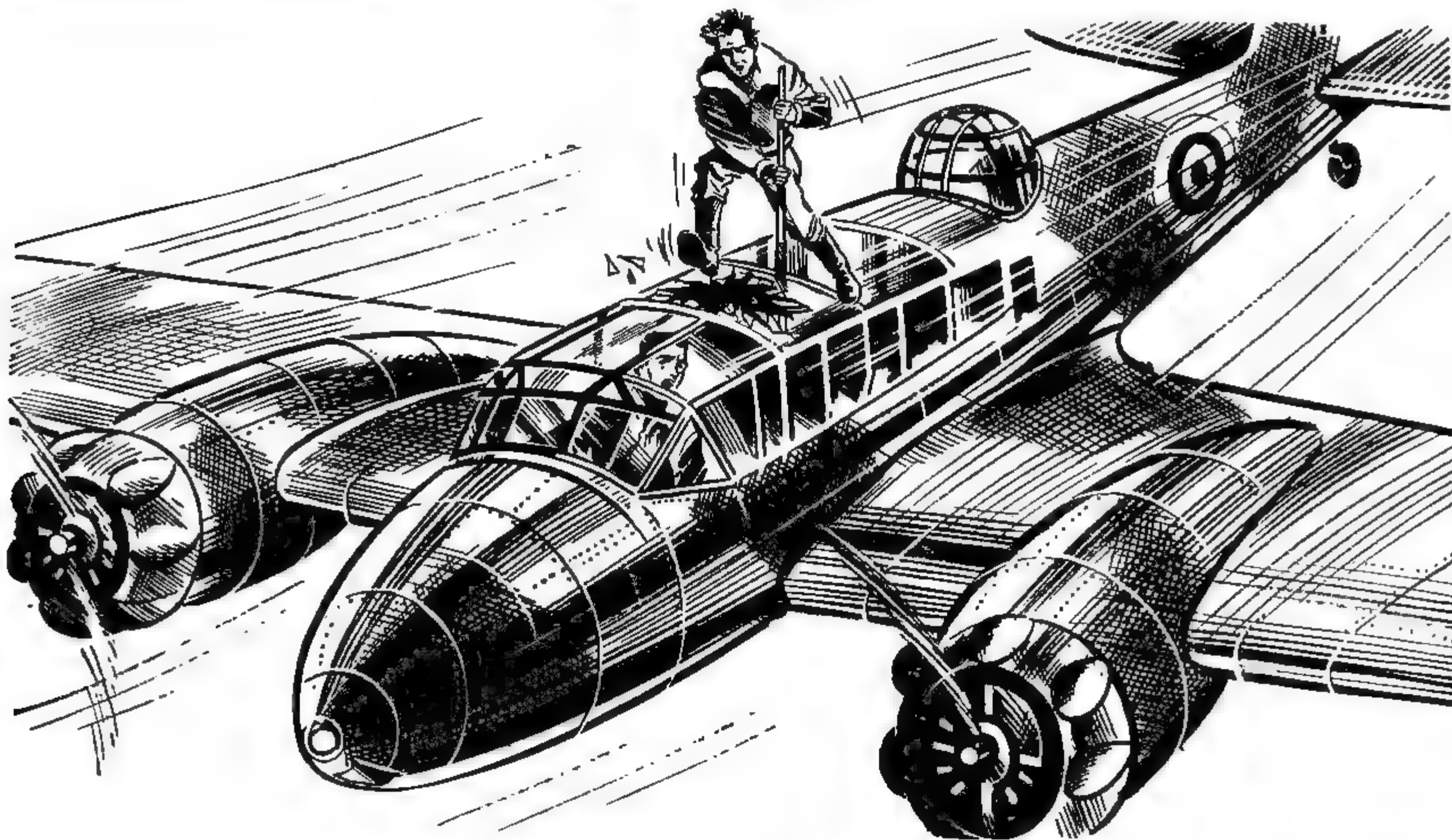
Then, with a muffled exclamation, Paddy spun towards him. Cupped in his outstretched hand he held—a small sliver of copper!

"Great guns—just as I suspected!" he rapped grimly. "Bullets aren't made of copper, chum. This can only mean one thing. See those marks where it's been eaten away on the side? It's a cunning acid bomb—a sort of hollow capsule with two compartments, and a different acid in each. When one eats through to the other they combine to make a big explosion, and—"

"Then—then it's true!" gasped Dick. "There's a saboteur at work right here—right here at Foxton. It's incredible!"

Paddy placed the piece of copper in his battledress pocket.

"Remember how Chuck and Pete both had those mysterious accidents last week?" he said, grimly. "Let's get round to the C.O.'s office pronto, and tell him what we've discovered, before any more of



Desperately Paddy Payne kicked a hole in the roof of the cabin. The daring fighter-pilot was determined to prevent the saboteur from reaching France with the British plane.

our kites get tampered with. By thunder, if I ever get my hands on the demon who—"

They strode away at top speed.

Neither of them saw the figure of the Nazi disguised as a Corporal, who stood silently behind the hangar, along by the Spitfires parked nearby.

His eyes glittered malevolently as he watched the two pilots hastening away.

When they'd gone some distance, he darted forward towards the nearest plane, and in his hands was an oval object, which gave a coppery glint in the light of the afternoon sun.

But at that moment Paddy stopped dead in his tracks.

"Oswald!" he said abruptly. "I've left him by the wreck. I'll nip back and get him, Dick. Hang on a jiff!"

Turning on his heels, the Squadron-Leader doubled back to the wrecked plane, shoved the duck inside his battledress, and made to return to Dick. It was then that he saw the Nazi in the act of placing another acid bomb in the fuselage of a Spitfire!

The Nazi looked up, and for the merest fraction of a second the two men stared unbelievably at each other. Then, with a hoarse shout, the Nazi turned and bolted.

Galvanised into action, Paddy sprinted after him.

Dick whirled at the sudden sounds, and saw Paddy chasing after the man, flat out!

"Saboteur—red-handed—after him!" Paddy's words floated faintly back to Dick as he too started to run. But, by now, both the pilots could see which way the blue-clad figure was heading. With a full fifty yards start, he was dashing straight for a twin-engined Anson aircraft, whose engines were ticking over, all ready for the "Weather Man's" flight crew to come over from the Briefing hut on the other side of the airfield.

With Paddy gaining on him every second, the Nazi flung himself into the waiting plane. Even as Paddy covered the remaining few yards at break-neck speed, the aircraft swung into wind, with a sudden burst of power from the engines. The saboteur was at the controls!

With a last despairing sprint, Paddy flung himself at the plane as it rumbled over the grass. Within a few seconds it would be out of his reach!

Then his clutching fingers clamped desperately on the tailplane edge, nails tearing with sharp jabs of pain as the aircraft gathered speed, faster, faster . . .

With every muscle strained to breaking point, Paddy felt himself being dragged across the 'drome. With a mighty effort, he managed to get first his knees and then his legs clear of the ground. Now he was perched precariously on the tailplane of the Anson. Then suddenly, with a bump and a lurch, the aircraft was airborne—and heading for enemy-occupied France!

Grimly Paddy began to edge along the smooth fuselage of the Anson, making superhuman use of every minute handhold that the plane's construction offered.

Then, after what seemed like an age of being buffeted by the gale force slipstream, he was within reach of the pilot's "glasshouse" at the nose of the plane. But, clinging like a fly to a wall, he realised with desperation that his hands could never break through the transparent plastic. Was he doomed, then, if he could maintain his grip that long, to be flown back into the heart of Nazi territory?

FLYING BLIND

THEN, seizing the radio aerial, Paddy swung himself up into the full force of the slipstream! Twisting himself desperately, he swung his feet hard down on to the "glasshouse." It gave! In a shattering shower of struts and splinters, Paddy crashed clean through into the pilot's cabin.

Amazed and aghast at Paddy's spectacular entry, the saboteur swung in his seat, mouth wide open, and eyes staring as if he'd seen a ghost. "Blitzen—" was all he managed to mouth, thickly. Great beads of perspiration began to form on his forehead.

"It's you—you! Payne! How in the name of—"

Paddy took one pace forward.

"I don't know your name, but, by Jingo, you've got a lot to answer for," he gritted. "If you value your life, head this kite back to Foxton—double pronto."

So saying, he shoved his hand inside his battledress, and, clutching Oswald still nestling there, jammed its beak against the cloth of his jacket to make it seem that a revolver's barrel was pointing at the Nazi.

For a second the saboteur blanched. Then suddenly he gave an oily laugh!

"Since when do R.A.F. officers carry firearms—and carry them inside their battledress?" he mouthed. And from his own hip pocket he drew an evil-looking automatic.

Like lightning Paddy whipped the rubber duck from inside his jacket, and, before the Nazi had time to level his gun, squeezed violently. Immediately a jet of stale water, still inside the mascot from his horse-play in the Mess earlier that day, struck the saboteur clean between the eyes, momentarily blinding him.

Like a tiger Paddy sprang forward. Smacking the gun from the Nazi with the edge of one hand, he lashed out a sizzling uppercut with the other.

The man reeled back against the control column, sending the Anson into a shallow dive.

But, as Paddy bent forward to heave him from the pilot's seat, the man lashed out with his legs, catching Paddy in the pit of the stomach.

Paddy gasped for breath, and the Nazi made as if

to grab at the automatic which was now lying on the floor of the aircraft. But this time Paddy was ready for him. Snatching at the fire extinguisher, which was clipped to the cabin wall there, Paddy twisted the release lever—and a stinging spray of chemical foam lashed and splattered at the saboteur, taking him completely by surprise.

As the man put up his hands to claw the stuff from his face, Paddy grabbed him by his tunic, and with a swift wrenching movement, sent him clattering among the flight instruments on the navigator's table.

With a groan the saboteur sank to the floor, and stayed there. The Nazi was out for the count!

But Paddy knew he wouldn't stay that way for long.

After setting the plane on an even keel, he pulled a parachute from its rack alongside the radio transmitter.

Then, with a quick tug at the shiny metal ring, he released the white canopy from its pack. Bundling the billowing material under the pilot's seat, he trailed the long nylon cords attached, across to the Nazi. Before the saboteur had time to recover consciousness, Paddy bound him hand and foot.

Now Paddy could get on with the job of getting back to base!

But, as he settled himself back in the pilot's seat, he gave a gasp. For the extinguisher, once started, had continued to eject its foamy spray. Now the windscreen was covered with a thick coating of a greasy grey substance, which was well-nigh impossible to wipe off, let alone see through!

Peering out of the side window, and heading the plane back towards Foxton as best he could, Paddy flicked the pilot's radio set switch to "Send."

"Hello, Control, hello Foxton Control. This is Payne calling. Am coming in towards you in Anson X-186. Have prisoner aboard. Windscreen obscured—flying blind. Can you help. Over . . ."

There was a second's pause. And then . . .

"Hello, Paddy! Hello, Paddy! Mighty glad to hear you're all in one piece, Skipper!"

Paddy gave a start of surprise. It was the voice of his chum Dick, who'd been anxiously waiting in the control tower for news from the Anson.

"Not to worry, chum!" Dick's voice came crackling into the receiver. "Just keep heading the way you're coming, pal. I can see you already. Once you get within prancing distance of the runway I'll talk you right on down to the deck, get it?"

"Roger. Wilco. Out!"

Paddy's reply was brief, and to the point, as he kept the Anson flying straight and level.

A minute passed.

Then: "Start reducing height, Skip, and make a slow turn to Port . . ."

In the control tower, Dick and the tensed watchers there saw the Anson's nose go down, and her turn to the left commence.

Dick waited until the plane was exactly in line with the main runway.

"Stop turning—now. Reduce height another 100 feet." The terse words echoed dramatically in the aircraft's cabin.

On the floor under the navigator's table the saboteur turned and twisted in vain, unable to break his bonds.

Now the plane was swirling in towards the airfield, still too high. It would be courting disaster for Paddy to have to open up and go round again. Dick acted fast.

"Get down, Paddy—get down!" he yelled. The Anson dipped earthwards, sharply. It came in over the perimeter track, lickety-split.

Dick's voice rang out again.

"Now level her out—reduce speed. Gently does it, gently. You're doing fine, chief . . ."

Then, as the plane started to sink towards the runway—

"Out engines!"

Instantly the props slowed up, the aircraft billowed a little, and then down to a perfect three-point landing!

A mob of cheering airman raced across the field, to where the Anson had rolled to a halt.

There was a moment's silence, as the bound figure of the saboteur was bundled into a jeep to be taken to the guard-house. Then the cheers broke out again, as Paddy was carried shoulder-high across the 'drome, holding above his head the small but unmistakable shape of a rubber duck—a duck named Oswald who'd played a gallant part in riding Foxton Spitfire Squadron of a dangerous enemy.

The menace of the sinister saboteur was over!

Later, at a riotous celebration in the Mess, it was Paddy who stepped forward solemnly, from a grinning gathering of fighter pilots, and, walking up to his lucky mascot, who had the place of honour on the piano, pinned a small pair of silver wings to its chest.

"In recognition of your services to us this illustrious day, I hereby appoint you Pilot Officer Oswald!" he chuckled.

And then, out across the darkened flight lines, out across the parked Spitfires—silent now, but soon to be thrusting their way up again to dauntless combat in the high skies above—came the sound of boisterous voices in jubilant unison . . .

"And the flying duck he quacked as the Nazi bomber bit the dust,

Who'll come a'hunting a Heinkel with me—
Quaaaaack!"

THE END

BIRDS and BEASTS of

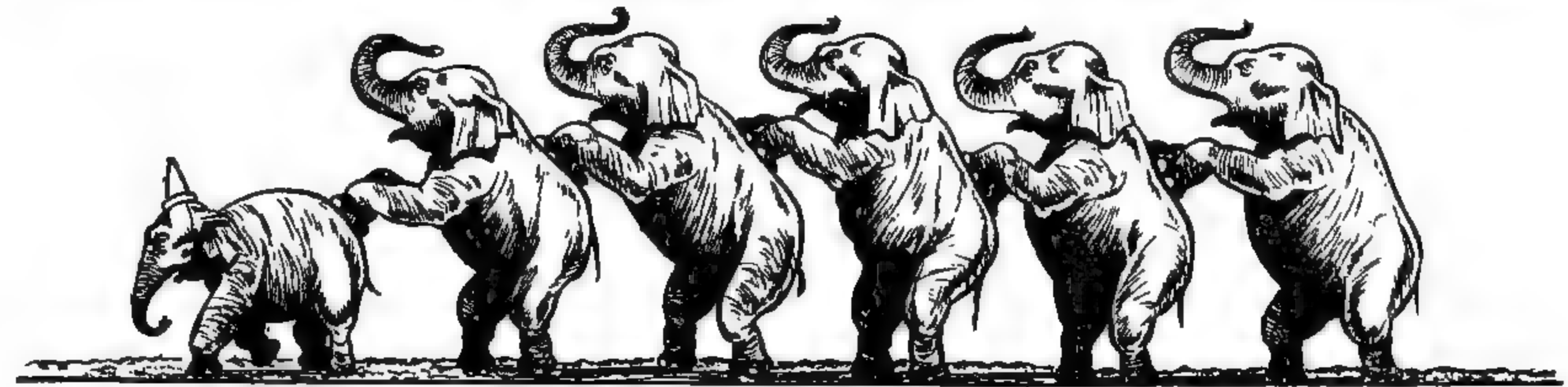
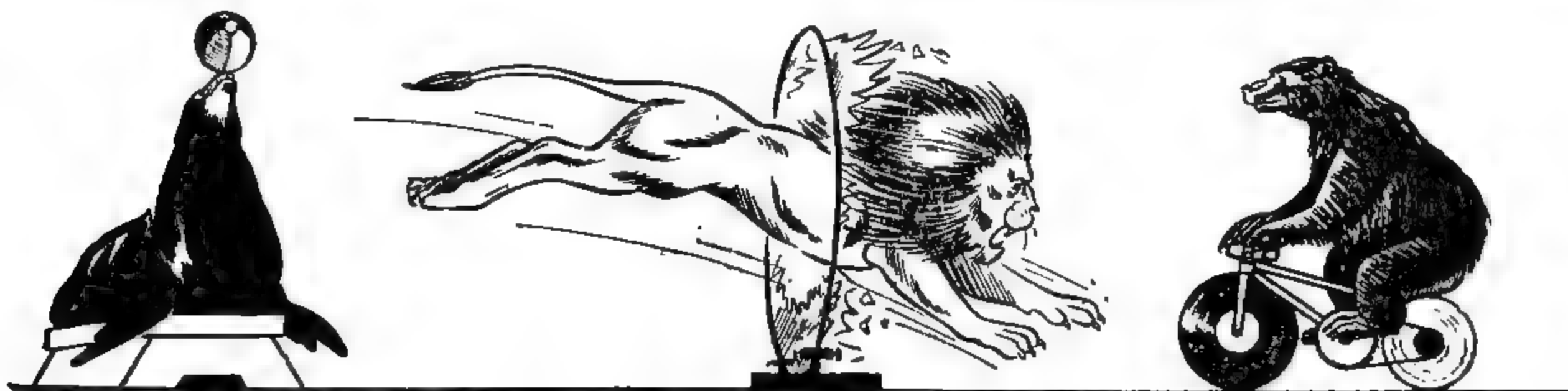
Interesting Facts About All the Creatures Which are Shown in the Coloured

1. **POLAR BEAR.** "King of the Arctic Ocean," it can swim and dive almost as well as a seal. It is equally at home on land. Its feet are covered with hair to keep it from slipping on the ice.
2. **WHITE-HEADED EAGLE.** Monarch of the air is this lordly eagle, though it is not a very dignified one. It feeds largely on carrion, only tackling live animals when they are weak and wounded.
3. **PUMA.** Also known as the American Lion, it can accommodate itself to a variety of climates from the cold and snow of British Columbia to the jungle swamps of South America. A fierce fighter even against grizzly bears and jaguars.
4. **ARCTIC TERN.** Closely related to the seagull, but is far more graceful and beautiful with its long, forked tail and slender wings. Small though it is, it travels many thousands of miles every year across the seas.
5. **BISON.** It once roamed the prairies in vast herds. By the end of the last century, however, had almost died out. It is now protected by law, but it is quite capable of protecting itself, for it is a vicious fighter.
6. **NARWHAL.** Sometimes called the sea unicorn, it is about 14 ft. long. It has a long horn or tusk protruding for about 7 ft. in front of it. Strangely enough this is not believed to be used for attack or defence.
7. **SLOTH.** It spends all its time hanging upside-down from the branches of the trees whose leaves and sap it feeds on. Even its hair grows "backwards" so that rain will drain off it.
8. **MARINE IGUANA.** Off the East coast of South America is a group of islands, the Galapagos, where there is a strange assortment of creatures, mostly reptiles, found nowhere else in the world. One is the Marine Iguana—the only lizard that lives in the sea. Though a fierce-looking creature, it is quite docile and feeds on seaweed.
9. **GIANT ANT-EATER.** It has a great hairy tail and a very long snout. It walks with a shuffling movement since its toes are kept bent back—to preserve the sharpness of its claws which it uses to break up termite nests.
10. **ANACONDA.** The mightiest of all the snakes, it depends on the enormous strength of its jaws and its 30-ft. body to capture its animal prey. For it is non-poisonous.
11. **DOLPHIN.** Not a fish—but a smaller relation of the whale. A very graceful creature, it can leap high in the air to seize its food.
12. **PORPOISE.** This is also related to the whale. Shoals of porpoises often feed heavily on the fish in the best-known fishing grounds, and are therefore very unpopular with fishermen.
13. **HAMMERHEAD SHARK.** All sharks are unpleasant creatures to meet; but the hammerhead is one of the most dreadful-looking, with its head prolonged on either side and its fierce little eyes at the ends.
14. **STING-RAY.** Also known as the Devil Fish, it has a very long tail which ends in a kind of whip with large, thorn-like spikes. It can inflict a serious wound.
15. **CASSOWARY.** A fierce and very strong bird, it lives in the dense forests of Queensland. Its horny helmet and powerful legs help it to force its way through the undergrowth.
16. **KOALA BEAR.** This lovable little creature would make a popular pet if it could be persuaded to feed in captivity. But it will only eat the leaves of certain gum trees, and Australians are forbidden to keep it.
17. **KANGAROO.** It has been aptly described as "the animal that jumps when it walks, sits down when it stands up, and carries its young in its pocket."
18. **ALBATROSS.** A giant of the air with a wingspan of 11-12 feet. It can fly without rest for days on end. One marked albatross followed the same ship for six consecutive days.
19. **DUCK-BILLED PLATYPUS.** A very peculiar creature. Although it is a mammal, it lays eggs!
20. **GOANNA.** Growing to six feet in length, it is as much at home in the trees as on the ground. It can walk and fight on its hind legs.
21. **KIWI.** One of the strangest-looking of birds. Its tall and wings are so small that they are almost unnoticeable. Its feathers are hairlike and its beak is very weak. A flightless bird about the size of a domestic hen.
22. **KILLER WHALE.** The most vicious and dangerous inhabitant of the sea. It hunts in packs and attacks even the biggest of other whales. Yet its closest relations are the docile porpoises and dolphins.
23. **SEA LION.** It's an expert swimmer and diver, and, unlike the seal, it is very agile on land. To tell the difference between a seal and a sea lion, look for the ears. If it has ear lobes showing, it's a sea lion.

This WONDERFUL WORLD

Pictures on the Inside Covers at the Beginning and End of this "Annual."

24. **RHINOCEROS.** The Indian species of this animal is fast dying out, largely because of the way it is hunted. Its horn is especially valued, although it consists of nothing more than a mass of hairs stuck together.
25. **GIBBON.** An ape with very long limbs. It can cover up to fifty feet in a single jump between branches of trees, and ten feet in a single swinging movement.
26. **RUSSIAN BEAR.** The largest carnivorous animal that lives on land. It will attack human beings only if suddenly surprised, or wounded, or if it is guarding its young.
27. **GIANT PANDA.** It lives in the densely-forested hill-sides of Tibet and parts of China, and feeds on bamboo shoots. A quiet and secretive creature, not a great deal is known about its habits.
28. **CROCODILE.** An ugly and dangerous reptile. In India it is regarded as sacred by the Hindus and is sometimes kept as a semi-domesticated pet.
29. **TIGER.** Second only to the lion in strength, size and ferocity, it is found all over India, Burma, China and much of Asia. Its stripes provide an excellent camouflage in the forests and jungles of grass in which it lives.
30. **SAWFISH.** A remarkable 20-ft. long creature whose snout is literally a double-edged saw of sharp spikes. It can rip its enemies to pieces.
31. **ASIAN TAPIR.** A rather stupid and clumsy smaller relative of the rhinoceros. It depends on its protective colouring for defence, but since its flesh is not very palatable it is not much hunted by the natives.
32. **SPERM WHALE.** The largest of the toothed whales. Its enormous head forms one third the length of its body. Its great enemy is the giant squid—a type of cuttle fish upon which it feeds.
33. **GIANT SQUID.** It grows to an enormous size, its tentacles being as much as forty feet in length. Jet propulsion enables it to get around. What it does is to draw water into its body and force it out through a siphon and so propel itself backward at great speed.
34. **CORMORANT.** A real fishing bird, being able to dive into the sea without a splash and pursue fish by swimming after them under water. The Japanese tether it and use it for catching fish from boats. The string around its neck is sufficiently tight to prevent it from swallowing the fish.
35. **ELEPHANT.** In spite of the fact that elephants are so widely hunted for their ivory—some have tusks 9 ft. long—they have maintained their numbers fairly well in central Africa, where they are usually found in herds of up to 100 strong.
36. **BLACK VULTURE.** Unlike most vultures, only one or two are seen together around a carcass. It will, however, drive off other vultures until it has had its fill. It is found all over Africa.
37. **CAMEL.** An almost entirely domesticated animal, it is famous for its carrying power and resistance to thirst. But it can be a nasty-tempered beast.
38. **GIRAFFE.** Bull giraffes have been known to reach a height of 19 ft., yet they still remain gracious creatures as they reach out to feed on the leaves of trees. Only when they have to spread out their legs to drink do they look rather ungainly.
39. **GORILLA.** The largest of all apes. An adult male may stand as high as 6 ft. and weigh 600 lb. It can walk a few paces upright, but usually it proceeds on all fours. An exceptionally powerful animal.
40. **LION.** The King of Beasts, it likes open country where it can find its natural prey—antelope and zebra. Lions usually hunt in family parties, and are really lazy. They still never trouble to attack a large animal if a smaller one is available.
41. **OSTRICH.** The largest living bird. Many grow to a height of 8 ft. It can run as fast as a galloping horse—which is probably why it has survived in such good numbers. Ostrich farming for its feathers was once a great South African industry.
42. **HIPPOPOTAMUS.** This huge, cumbrous animal spends most of his time wallowing in pools and on river banks. It is quite inoffensive normally, though if aroused could easily kill a man with its keen-edged teeth—some a foot in length.
43. **GANNET.** A large sea bird that rarely comes to land except to breed. To catch fish it rises high in the air and then dives down like a stone, air cushions in its body breaking the force of the fall. It usually swallows the fish whilst still under the water.
44. **COELACANTH.** A great stir occurred in the scientific world a few years ago when a coelacanth was caught off the coast of Madagascar. This fish was supposed to have been extinct for a million years. So important was the discovery that a plane was especially chartered by the South African government to bring it back for scientific study.



STARRING
SERGEANT SAMSON
of the MOUNTIES

TOO SMART FOR THE VANISHING BANDITS

BY HAL WILTON



THE LAWMAN MAKES A PROMISE

SERGEANT SAMSON of the Canadian Mounties rode his horse Warpaint up to the police post at Wilderness Creek.

It was the end of a twenty-four hour hunt, and both man and horse looked near exhaustion. Worse still, they had drawn a blank!

The sergeant slid from the saddle, and led Warpaint to his stable. Though tired and hungry, the Mountie made it his first job to see to the needs of his horse.

"Beats me where those two robbers disappeared to, Warpaint," the sergeant murmured wearily. "But we're not licked yet, boy. We've gotta keep on hunting until we find 'em. The Mounties never give up!"

Sergeant Samson was feeling annoyed and frustrated!

For three times in recent weeks a daring pair of crooks had struck at Wilderness Creek.

The first time they had raided the town's store, the second time they had picked on the hotel, and then, two nights ago, they had had the nerve to raid the bank!

Each time they had got away with a good haul. After each raid attempts had been made to follow them, but the crooks were experts at shaking off pursuit, and each time the hunt had fizzled out.

This was a serious matter for Sergeant Samson. He had a large area to patrol, with a thinly scattered population, and only one constable to help him.

If the crooks were allowed to get away with any more crimes, both Sergeant Samson's personal reputation, and local respect for the authority of the Mounties would be ruined.

A Thrilling Story of Baffling Mystery in the Canadian Backwoods

Now, impatient at his own failure, he went through into the kitchen.

Looki, his Eskimo cook, had heard him enter the stable and, knowing that he would be starving hungry, already had a steak frying for him.

"Sure smells good." The sergeant brightened, then asked, "Is there any news from Constable Kelly?"

Kelly was his assistant, who was also helping in the hunt.

"Came in around midnight, but he not find anything," answered the cook. "I fix him some supper. He sleep until dawn and then go out again."

"Trail's cold by now. Every hour that goes by, we've got that much less chance of finding 'em," declared the sergeant glumly. "This thing's got me plumb bewildered!"

The thick juicy steak lay invitingly on the plate before him. But, just as he was getting ready to tuck in, Looki spoke again.

"Some of the boys still in your office, waiting for news," he said.

With a deep sigh of regret the sergeant replaced his knife and fork.

He went through to his office, where a small crowd of men were waiting patiently. All the leading citizens of Wilderness Creek were gathered there; Banker Hayward, Doc Fields, Frenchie, who kept the hotel, Pop Walters the blacksmith, and many others.

Most of them had tried to help join in the hunt for the crooks, but had given up when they could find no trail to follow.

"Well, sergeant?" asked Banker Hayward brusquely. "What news have you brought us of the Vanishing Bandits? When can we hope for an arrest?"

Sergeant Samson smiled grimly.

"Vanishing Bandits" was the nickname the people of Wilderness Creek had given to the pair of elusive crooks.

"Kelly and I are working on it every hour of daylight," the Mountie explained. "We shan't ease up until we catch this pair of skunks."

"That's all very well," protested the banker. "But how long is it going to take? And how many more villainous attacks are we going to have to suffer in the meantime?"

"I'll be honest with you," confessed Samson. "Right now I'm bushed. I thought I knew every square yard of my territory, every possible hiding place, but these two just seem to vanish into thin air. It's plain uncanny!"

"Guess we shouldn't put all the responsibility on your shoulders," put in Pop Walters. "We've all racked our brains. But we've none of us been any help to you. We can't figure where the Vanishing Bandits disappear to."

"I followed the trail clear along the gorge almost to Red Man's Leap. Got pretty near to the ruins of the old bridge that was carried away in last year's floods. That's where I lost the scent. But there was no sign of their having doubled back or taken to the water. It beats me," admitted Sergeant Samson.

Banker Hayward drew himself up—a shade pompously.

"In that case don't you think it's about time you asked for extra help from Fort Dawson?" he snapped.

Sergeant Samson squared his jaw grimly. Fort Dawson was the Mountie headquarters. If he had to send there for help it would be an admission of failure. It was something he had never had to do before, and it was the last thing he wanted to do now.

Yet the banker was right. Wilderness Creek was entitled to protection. If Sergeant Samson couldn't provide it, it was up to him to appeal to Fort Dawson.

"Give me another twenty-four hours," he begged.

"Guess that's fair enough," declared Doc Fields. "You've always done a fine job for us, sergeant, and the Creek has been proud of you. We wouldn't want to spoil your record at headquarters."

"That's right. Leave it to the sergeant," urged Frenchie from the hotel.

The others all murmured their agreement. Seeing himself outnumbered Banker Hayward grudgingly gave in.

"Very well then. Another twenty-four hours. But, if the Vanishing Bandits haven't been caught by then, I shall consider it my duty to the bank's clients to see that Fort Dawson is informed," he growled.

"Thanks, folks. I promise I won't let you down!" Sergeant Samson vowed.

The crowd trooped out. Sergeant Samson watched them disperse along the street, then turned back towards the kitchen.

"I'll just finish off that steak, then I'll get on the trail again," he said to himself.

But even as he picked up his knife and fork he heard a yell and a crash from outside.

Mystified he rushed out into the stable yard to find Looki sprawling on his back. The Eskimo picked himself up and pointed to a big bone over which he had tripped.

"That's another one!" he complained. "That dog of yours, that Butch, he bring in bones from every place. Then he leave them where I fall over them. Plenty soon we gonna be knee deep in bones."

Sergeant Samson chuckled. Butch was his favourite husky dog, the lead-dog of the police team. It was true that Butch had a passion for collecting bones.

"Why don't you throw them out when Butch isn't looking?" he asked with a grin.

"Tried that. He always bring them back!" grumbled Looki.

"By the way, where is Butch?" asked the sergeant.

"He went off this morning with Indian Charlie," explained Looki. "Charlie has gone up to his winter cabin to look over his gear and get it ready for next season."

Sergeant Samson nodded understandingly. Indian Charlie was a half-breed who acted as local guide to hunting parties, and filled in his spare time trapping. He was one of Butch's special pals.

The sergeant once more sat down to his steak, but before he could get the first slice to his mouth a sudden noise brought him leaping again to his feet.

THE SECRET OF THE WINTER HUT

CRACK! Crack! Crack!

Shots were echoing from the direction of the creek.

The sergeant sprang to the window and looked out. A gasp of amazement burst from his lips.

He saw Butch streaking along the distant bank of the creek. The husky gripped a huge bone in its jaws!

Then the Mountie stiffened!

He could see now who was doing the shooting. There among the trees galloped two masked men—and their rifles were aimed straight at the racing Butch!

"The Vanishing Bandits!" gasped Sergeant Samson.

For a second he was too amazed to move. Why had the mysterious crooks dared to venture so close to the police post in daylight? Why were they shooting at Butch?

In a flash the sergeant shook off the effects of his surprise. Grabbing a rifle, he burst out of the hut!

Butch had reached the edge of the creek and was splashing in to swim across to the police post.

Crack!

An outlaw bullet splashed the water close to Butch's muzzle. The husky dropped the big bone into the shallows.

With a triumphant yell one of the masked men galloped into the water. Bending low in the saddle, he reached to retrieve the bone.

Immediately Sergeant Samson flung his rifle to his shoulder. The range was too great for accurate shooting, but he let go a couple of quick shots, and the outlaw swerved.

Quick as a flash Butch doubled back, grabbed the bone away from the outlaw's grasping fingers, and began to swim powerfully across the creek with his prize.

Sergeant Samson raced to saddle Warpaint, but

by the time he rode out the two masked men had vanished. Undaunted, he crossed the creek and picked up the outlaw trail among the trees, only to lose it again in a low scrub-covered valley at a point where the outlaws had taken to the water to cover their tracks.

The sergeant bit his lip—a dead end again! Quickly he returned to the police post, his brain teeming with questions.

Why should two badly-wanted men risk approaching so close to the police post? Just to take a bone away from a dog? It was baffling.

As Sergeant Samson swung down from the saddle, Butch, the bone still gripped in its jaws, was shaking the water from its coat.

It then padded up to the Mountie, laid the bone at his feet, and looked up at him intelligently.

Puzzled, Sergeant Samson glanced down at the bone.

And the next second he stooped to pick it up, his heart pounding with sudden excitement.

For the bone had a message roughly scratched along its length!

"Red Man's Leap. Help."

"Looki!" he shouted excitedly. "Isn't Indian Charlie's winter cabin up at Red Man's Leap?"

"Sure is," agreed the Eskimo.

"And it was near there, at the ruined bridge, that I lost the trail of the Vanishing Bandits," declared the sergeant thoughtfully. "Then Indian Charlie must be in some kind of trouble—and it's connected with the outlaws. Indian Charlie knew that Butch would bring the bone back here. So he used the dog to send a message, which means that for some reason he couldn't come back himself. I'm riding up there right away!"

But first of all Sergeant Samson took hold of Butch by the collar, and hauled him to a shed. Butch didn't like it. He resisted every step of the way. He knew that something exciting was happening, and didn't want to be left out.

Sergeant Samson bolted the door on the dog. The husky hurled himself against it in angry disgust.

"Don't let him out until I get back," Sergeant Samson instructed Looki. "The Vanishing Raiders have had one go at killing Butch already. They're not getting another chance. In some way he's a danger to them, and they know it!"

"Okay, but what about this steak? She's gonna spoil if you don't eat her up soon," protested the Eskimo.

"Better eat it yourself," suggested the Mountie with a shrug. "This is my last chance to round up those two crooks. I shan't be back until I can bring the Vanishing Bandits with me."

He spurred away along the creek. A few miles

from the town the low banks gradually gave way to steeply rising ground. At length the river ran between the high, vertical walls of a gorge slashed through a steeply sloping mountainside of slippery-smooth rock.

The trail to Indian Charlie's winter cabin followed the high slopes above the gorge. From his lofty position the sergeant could scan miles of wilderness, but there was no sign of the elusive outlaws.

He came in sight of the ruined bridge, and beyond it the dizzy crag known as Red Man's Leap, named after a redskin who, to escape from pursuing enemies, had once, long ago, performed the almost incredible feat of jumping across the gorge.

At the top of the smooth sloping ground above the Leap stood Indian Charlie's solitary cabin.

Sergeant Samson shouted as he approached, but the sound of his voice brought no sign of life.

The Mountie spurred his horse forward anxiously. He tried the cabin door, but found it fast shut. Then he noticed that the one window, which had its glass smashed, was shuttered from the inside.

Almost at the same moment, he made the alarming discovery that the shutter was pitted with bullet holes.

He pulled his rifle from its scabbard, and hammered with the butt until the shutter fell inwards with a clatter.

He peered inside. The first thing he noticed was that the door was wedged shut with a sledge, which had been jammed against it as a barricade.

Then he saw Indian Charlie! The half-breed was sprawled on the floor in a pool of blood!

Sergeant Samson knocked the rest of the glass from the window and crawled through. He kicked the sledge aside and opened the door to let in more light, then bent anxiously over Indian Charlie.

The half-breed was not dead, as the Mountie had first feared, but he had been badly wounded and was weak from loss of blood.

His eyes opened as Sergeant Samson skilfully administered first aid.

"Sarge!" he whispered in

a faint voice. "So Butch reached you with the message? I've learnt the secret of the Vanishing Bandits' hide-out. They shot me—did their best to stop me—"

His voice began to fade away. He made a desperate effort to rouse himself again.

"Sorry about this, Sarge," he whispered in a voice so faint the Mountie could hardly hear it. "Trying to tell you—Red Man's Leap—Butch knows where—"

The voice faded away into nothing. Indian Charlie was unconscious!

PERIL AT RED MAN'S LEAP

SERGEANT SAMSON thought rapidly, trying to decide what he ought to do. The Vanishing Bandits must be somewhere near, if they had returned to their hide-out after pursuing Butch. Should he hunt for them now, or wait until Indian Charlie could tell him more?

Butch knew the secret. Butch could have been a



Butch dropped the bone at his master's feet, then looked up at him intelligently. The faithful dog had delivered an amazing S.O.S.

big help. But the husky was back at the police post—or so Sergeant Samson thought.

Actually the intelligent husky was a good deal nearer than that!

Butch had been annoyed at being left behind, but the dog hadn't wasted a lot of energy hurling itself against the door of the shed. The husky was smart. It soon figured out that if it couldn't go through the door it might be able to get underneath.

The shed had an earth floor. The husky began to dig!

Soon its paws were making the dirt fly. Rapidly it tunnelled a gap under the door, large enough to squeeze through.

Looki, glancing through his kitchen window, was just in time to see Butch going away towards the creek full pelt.

Meanwhile Sergeant Samson was coming to a decision. Indian Charlie needed the expert attention of Doc Fields. With regret the Mountie had decided that his hunt for the Vanishing Bandits would have to wait, even though delay might give the outlaws time to escape.

Sergeant Samson had pledged his word to bring in the outlaws within twenty-four hours, and failure to keep it would be a bad blot on his reputation, but he *had* to put the needs of the injured half-breed first!

He brought Warpaint up to the cabin door. He didn't know whether to try to get Indian Charlie into the saddle, or whether to put him on the sledge and drag him to the Creek.

While he stood, trying to decide which would be the less uncomfortable for the injured man, his glance wandered along the gorge and across Red Man's Leap.

Somewhere within view of this cabin was the outlaw hide out. Indian Charlie had spotted it, and the Vanishing Bandits had shot him to keep their secret.

Sergeant Samson looked down the slope and across the gorge, but failed to spot anything that would give him a clue, until suddenly a movement caused him to go tense.

Something was moving, far below, on the other side of the gorge.

At first, as the object darted indistinctly through thick scrub, the Mountie supposed it to be a man.

Then he gasped.

"Butch!"

So the husky had managed to escape, and was on the trail again.

Suddenly the Mountie saw Butch stop, at a point almost directly below him on the opposite side of the gorge. Then began questing around, nose close to the ground.

Butch started to dig between two small patches of scrub.

The Mountie peered down. What was the dog trying to uncover?

Samson looked round for some means of joining the husky, but there was no way across Red Man's Leap. No attempt had been made to repair the old bridge after heavy flooding had washed it down, and now to get to the other side of the gorge meant a journey of several miles.

By now Butch had scraped away several inches of dirt. The husky's claws were scratching at something hard.

"By thunder," Samson muttered to himself. "I'm beginning to understand—"

Even as the words crossed his lips a square patch of ground and the stunted scrub was hurled backwards, revealing a dark opening.

"A hidden trap-door! An underground hide-out!" exclaimed Sergeant Samson. "Indian Charlie must have seen the outlaws using it—"

At that moment a man's head and shoulders appeared in the opening. The man clutched a leather bag.

Butch had been hurled into a patch of briar when the concealed trap-door was flung open. The dog was now struggling to free itself.

"That pesky police dog is back!" the man in the opening yelled. "We should have stayed to finish it off the first time. It'll be the death of us yet. Bring a gun!"

The second of the elusive Vanishing Bandits peered out of the opening, carrying a rifle.

Sergeant Samson's brain raced!

Somehow he had to get across the gorge in double-quick time, otherwise Butch's fate was sealed.

According to the old story the escaping redskin had jumped the gap, but the Mountie had never believed the legend. Such a jump would have been beyond the powers of even a trained athlete.

Then his glance fell on the sledge, and a wildly reckless idea occurred to him.

It was a crazy notion, and one that might well end in sudden death, but the Mountie's dog pal was in peril and he did not hesitate.

He hurled the sledge flat and flung himself on it.

The sledge went slithering down the rain-smoothed sloping rock with gathering speed. Faster and faster it streaked over the ground towards the sheer vertical drop at the edge of the towering gorge.

The man with the rifle was about to take aim at Butch.

Sergeant Samson let out a shout that echoed clear across the gorge.

"Stop! Stop, you rat!"

The shout brought the bandits jerking round.

Both men stared, open mouthed, at the sledge hurtling at express speed down the slope.

The man with the rifle swung round to aim at the speeding Mountie. His pal grabbed his arm roughly.

"Don't shoot! We don't want him found with a bullet in him. The fool's bound to do the job for us by breaking his neck, anyway. He must be crazy as a loon!"

The ground was whizzing past Sergeant Samson's eyes in a dizzy blur. He saw the edge of the gorge streaking towards him. Suddenly with a hiss, and a shower of rock that crumbled away from the edge, the sledge zoomed into space.

Sergeant Samson felt as if he was hanging in mid-air.

A horrifying distance below him, the creek waters raced through the bottom of the gorge.

The opposite side of the cliff appeared to be rising through space to meet him.

It all took only a matter of seconds, but to Samson it seemed like minutes.

The sledge appeared to be losing momentum. For a moment he felt sure that he was going to drop short and plunge into the gorge. It hung an agonising second in the air!

Then, miraculously, he was over, landing with a bone-jarring thump near the disguised trap door.

For a moment both crooks were petrified, unable to believe their eyes. Then the one with the rifle pulled himself together.

"Good glory! He made it!"

He swung up the rifle again, and took aim.

He had the onrushing Mountie right in his sights.

His finger tightened on the trigger. Then a snarling bundle of hurtling bone and fur struck him full in the back. Butch had clawed free and landed on him like a ton of bricks!

The outlaw yelled in fright and agony as powerful fangs closed on his arm.

Sergeant Samson rolled off the still fast-moving sledge and let it slide away from him. He bounded to his feet just as the second outlaw dropped his leather bag and went for his gun.

Sergeant Samson sprang at him. A cracking punch on the jaw topped the bandit headlong back down a wooden ladder.

The man scrambled to his feet, fighting mad. But the daring Mountie launched himself down the shaft and crashed with stunning force on to the bandit.

The fight that followed was short, but furious. As the Mountie sprawled across the floor of the

underground hide-out, the desperate crook managed to wriggle out from under him. Staggering to his feet, he seized a heavy, roughly-made chair and swung it high over his head. But Sergeant Samson was too fast for him. He leapt across the room, his bunched fist swinging.

And one power-packed punch from Sergeant Samson put the man out for the count.

Climbing up the shaft, Samson saw that Butch was standing guard over the other man, growling threateningly, teeth at his throat.

In the underground room the sergeant found all the loot that had been taken in the raids on Wilderness Creek, and nearby, after he had handcuffed the two crooks, he found their horses in another cunningly contrived hide.

About an hour later the inhabitants of Wilderness Creek rushed out into the main street to greet an unusual procession.

At the head came the sergeant, on Warpaint, leading the outlaws' horses. Then came the Vanishing Bandits, ropes over their shoulders attached to the sledge on which wounded Indian Charlie lay, with Butch bringing up the rear, ready to nip the ankles of the two crooks if they showed signs of slacking.

Sergeant Samson waved to Doc Fields.

"Got a patient for you here, Doc. Better fix him up as soon as you can. I'm taking these other two birds along to the cells."

Sergeant Samson herded his two captives towards the police post.

Looki saw them coming, and nodded with satisfaction.

"Now mebbe you got time to eat a steak. I'll put a fresh one in the pan."

The Mountie had just locked the prisoners in a cell when Constable Kelly rode dejectedly up to the post.

"Sorry, Sarge. Haven't seen hide nor hair of those two jaspers. Vanishing Bandits! Guess they're well named. Figure they must plumb vanish into the ground."

"You don't know how right you are," chuckled the sergeant. "But relax. The hunt's over. Go take a look in the cells."

Looki peered out from the kitchen.

"Hello, Mr. Kelly! You're back. Guess I'd better put another steak in the pan."

"Make it two," laughed Sergeant Samson. "One for Butch. He sure earned it!"

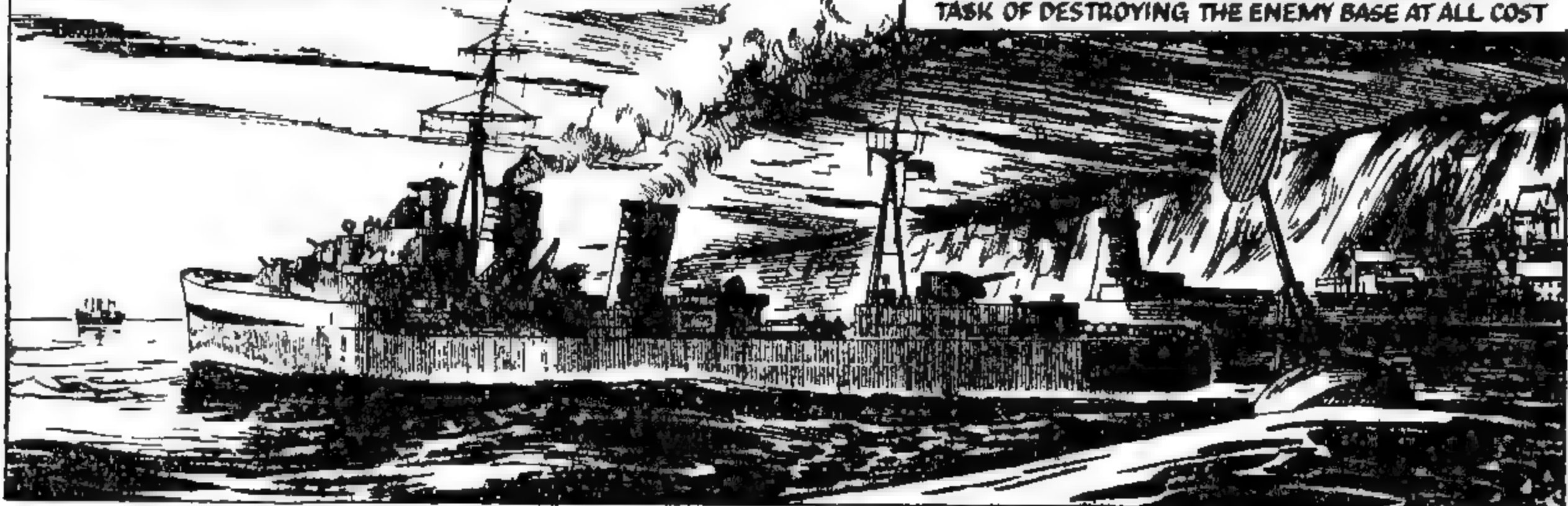
THE END

OPERATION TORPEDO!

BY
CLIFF
HOOPER

THE NAZI SUBMARINE MENACE WAS AT ITS HEIGHT DURING WORLD WAR II. EVERY DAY, BRITISH FOOD SHIPS WERE BEING TORPEDOED AND SUNK. THE ALLIES KNEW THAT MANY OF THE LONG-RANGE U-BOATS SET OUT FROM A GREAT CONCRETE PEN SPECIALLY BUILT ON THE COAST OF FRANCE. THUS IT WAS THAT THE ROYAL NAVY WAS GIVEN THE TASK OF DESTROYING THE ENEMY BASE AT ALL COST

AT CRACK OF DAWN ONE MORNING, A BRITISH DESTROYER SLID OUT OF A SOUTH COAST PORT INTO THE ENGLISH CHANNEL



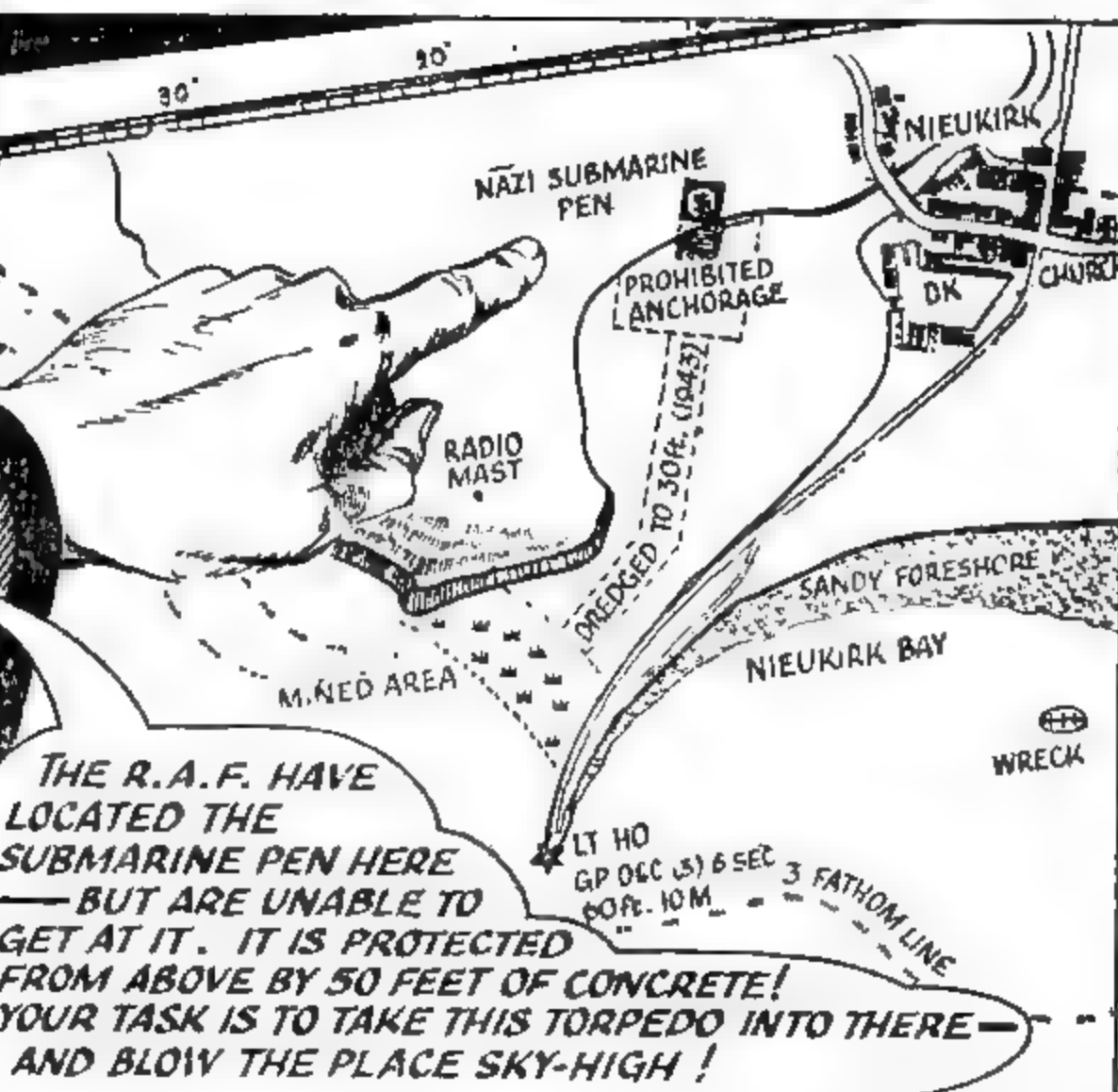
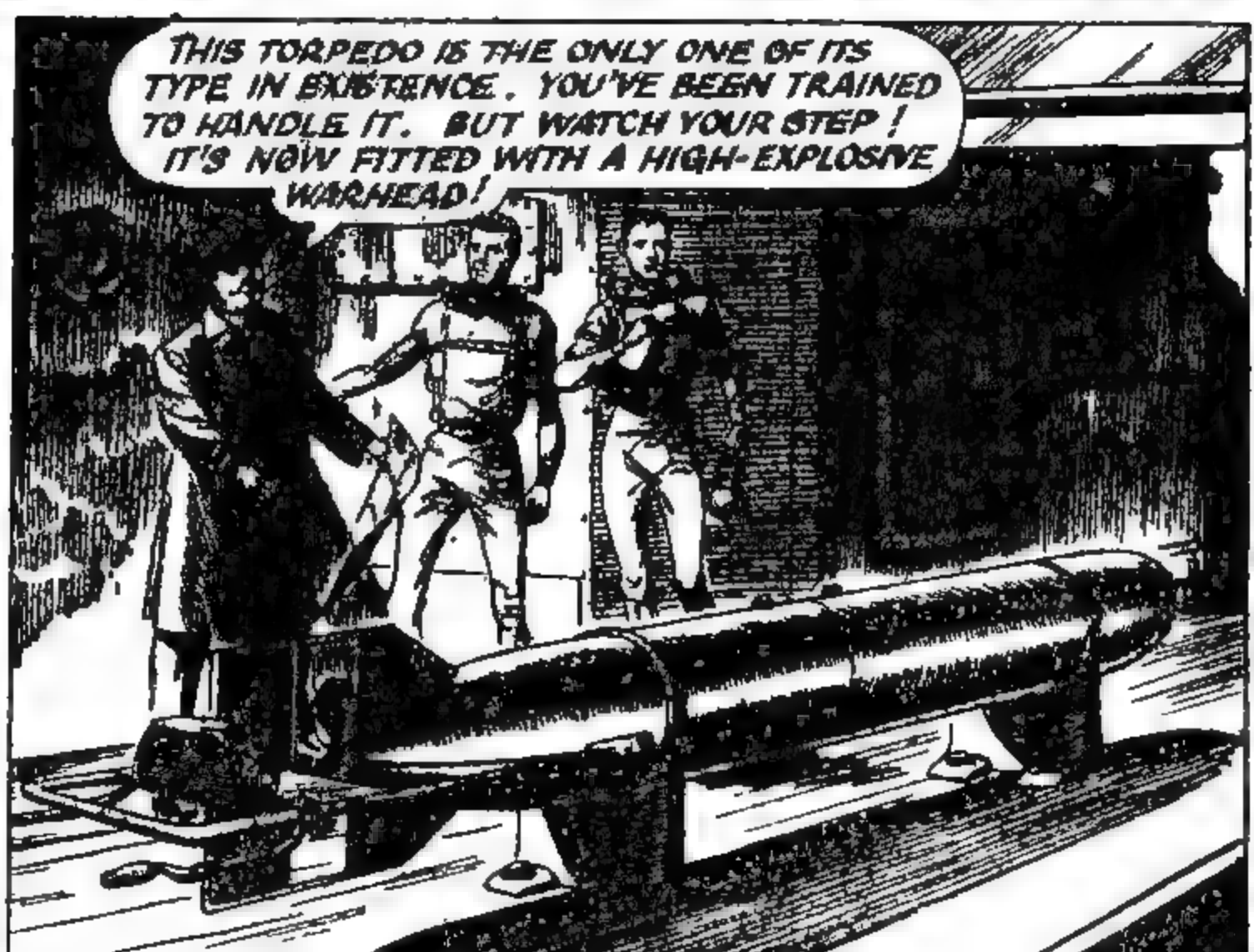
ON DECK, TWO YOUNG MARINES NAMED NOBBY CLARK AND BERT BRADLEY WERE BEING BRIEFED BY THE NAVAL COMMANDER

WELL, MEN. YOU TWO VOLUNTEERED TO TACKLE ANYTHING. NOW HERE'S YOUR SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT. AND I CAN TELL YOU THAT THE FATE OF OUR COUNTRY MAY HANG ON IT!



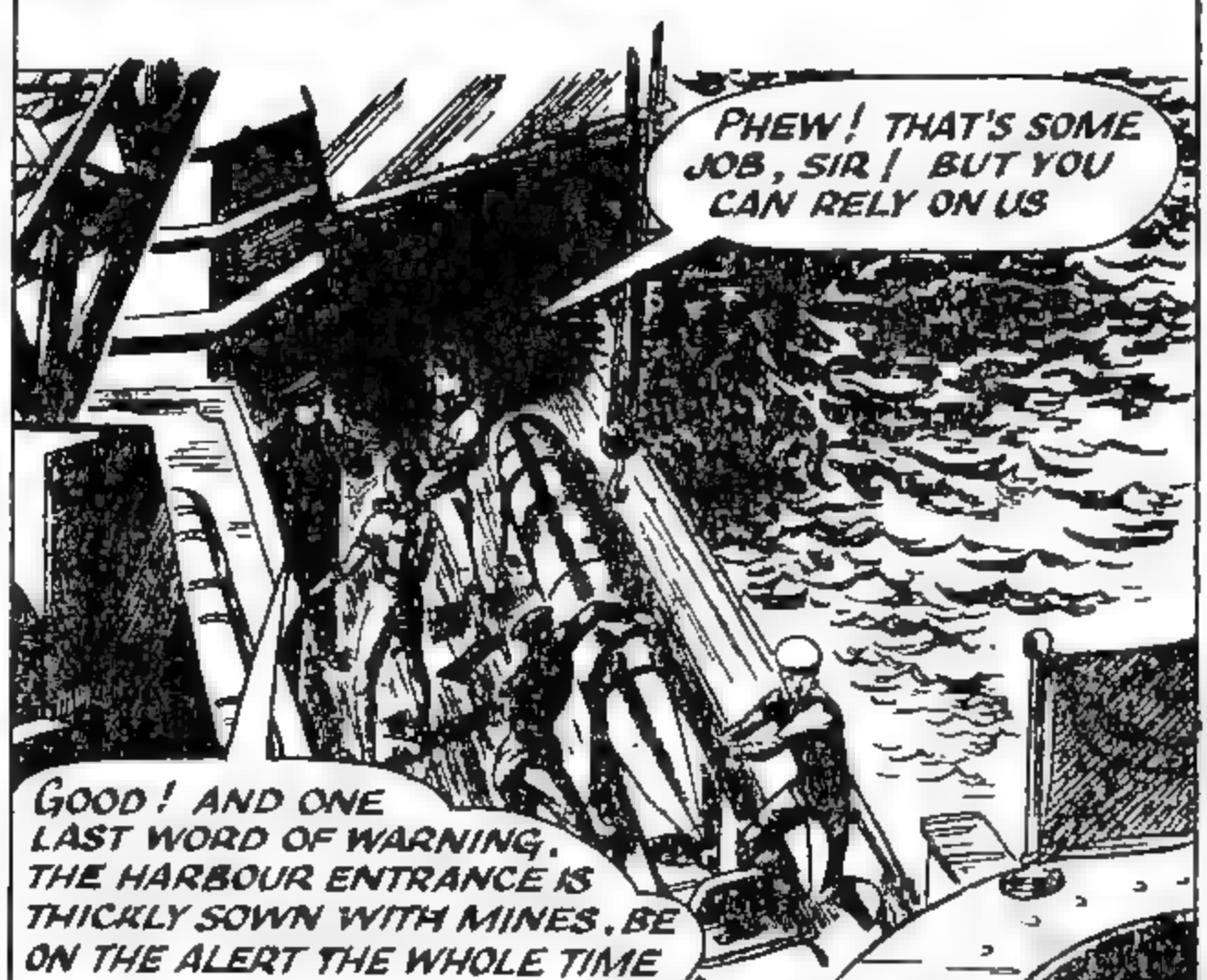
WE'RE
READY FOR
ANYTHING,
SIR

THIS TORPEDO IS THE ONLY ONE OF ITS TYPE IN EXISTENCE. YOU'VE BEEN TRAINED TO HANDLE IT. BUT WATCH YOUR STEP! IT'S NOW FITTED WITH A HIGH-EXPLOSIVE WARHEAD!



THE R.A.F. HAVE LOCATED THE SUBMARINE PEN HERE — BUT ARE UNABLE TO GET AT IT. IT IS PROTECTED FROM ABOVE BY 50 FEET OF CONCRETE! YOUR TASK IS TO TAKE THIS TORPEDO INTO THERE — AND BLOW THE PLACE SKY-HIGH!

NOBBY CLARK GAVE A LOW WHISTLE



PHEW! THAT'S SOME JOB, SIR! BUT YOU CAN RELY ON US

GOOD! AND ONE LAST WORD OF WARNING. THE HARBOUR ENTRANCE IS THICKLY SOWN WITH MINES. BE ON THE ALERT THE WHOLE TIME

SOON THE DESTROYER MOVED TO, AND THE TORPEDO WAS GENTLY LOWERED INTO THE WATER

THE BEST OF LUCK, MEN. DON'T LET THE NAVY DOWN

NOT LIKELY, SIR. WE'LL BLOW UP THAT SUB-PEN — OR BUST!

BERT STARTED UP THE SILENT ELECTRIC MOTOR OF THE TORPEDO. THEN TOGETHER THE TWO PALS SET OFF TOWARDS THE FRENCH COAST

ADJUST YOUR MASK, BERT. WE'D BETTER SUBMERGE FROM NOW ON

OKAY, NOBBY. HERE WE GO!

AS THEY SLID ALONG UNDERWATER, THE TWO MARINES WERE TENSELY AWARE THAT THE NAZI DEFENCES WOULD BE ON CONSTANT WATCH

STEADILY THEY DREW NEARER TO THE FRENCH HARBOUR. ALL AT ONCE BERT PRESSED HIS HELMET AGAINST NOBBY'S IN ORDER TO SPEAK TO HIM

TAKE IT EASY, CHUM! I CAN SEE MINES AHEAD. WE'VE REACHED THE HARBOUR MOUTH!

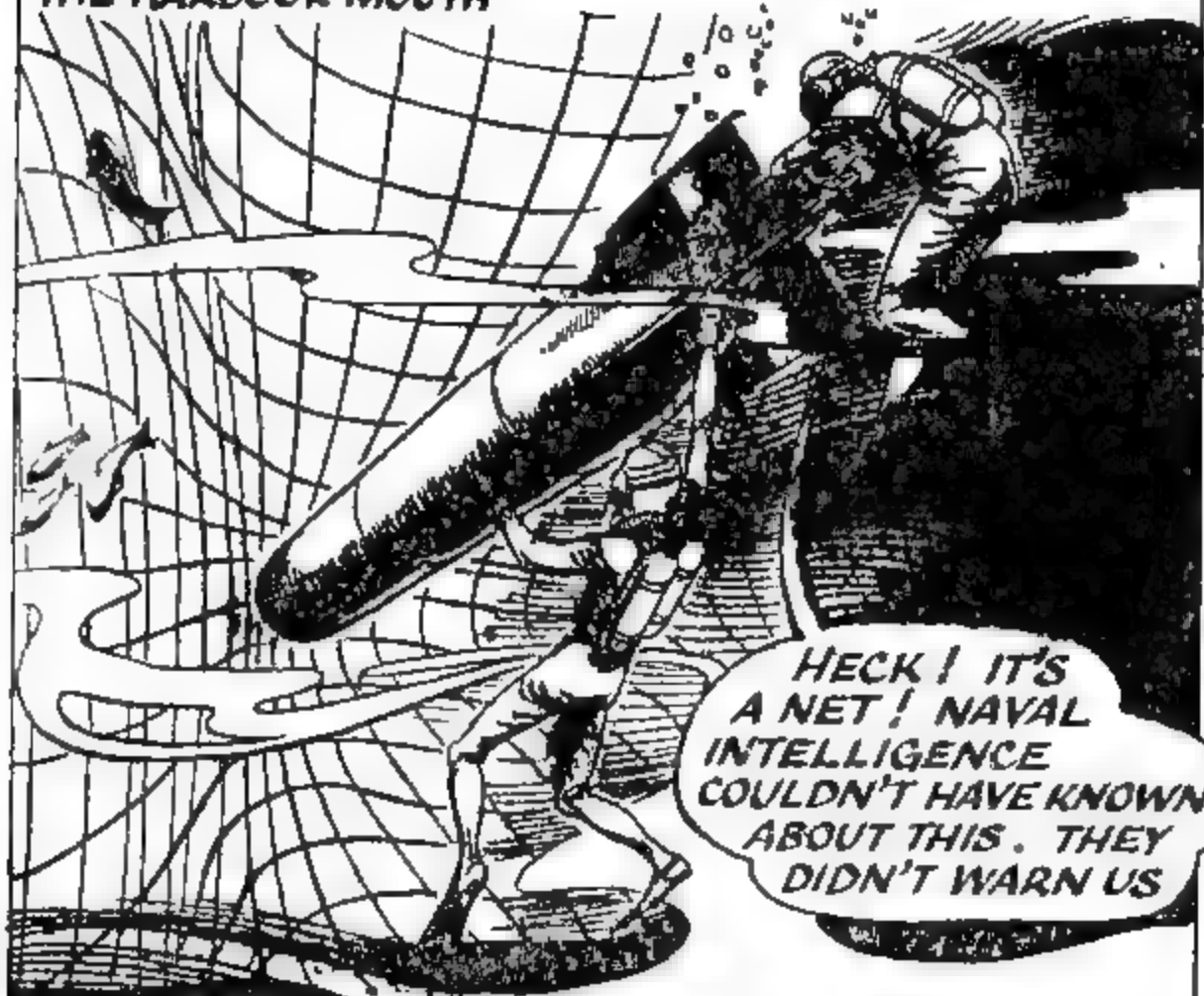
WITH HEARTS THUDDING, THE TWO SHIPMATES GUIDED THE TORPEDO THROUGH THE SCREEN OF TETHERED MINES

PHEW! THIS IS TOUGH GOING. IF WE COLLIDED WITH ONE OF THOSE, IT'D BE THE END FOR BOTH OF US!

SUDDENLY BERT GAVE A DESPERATE YELL

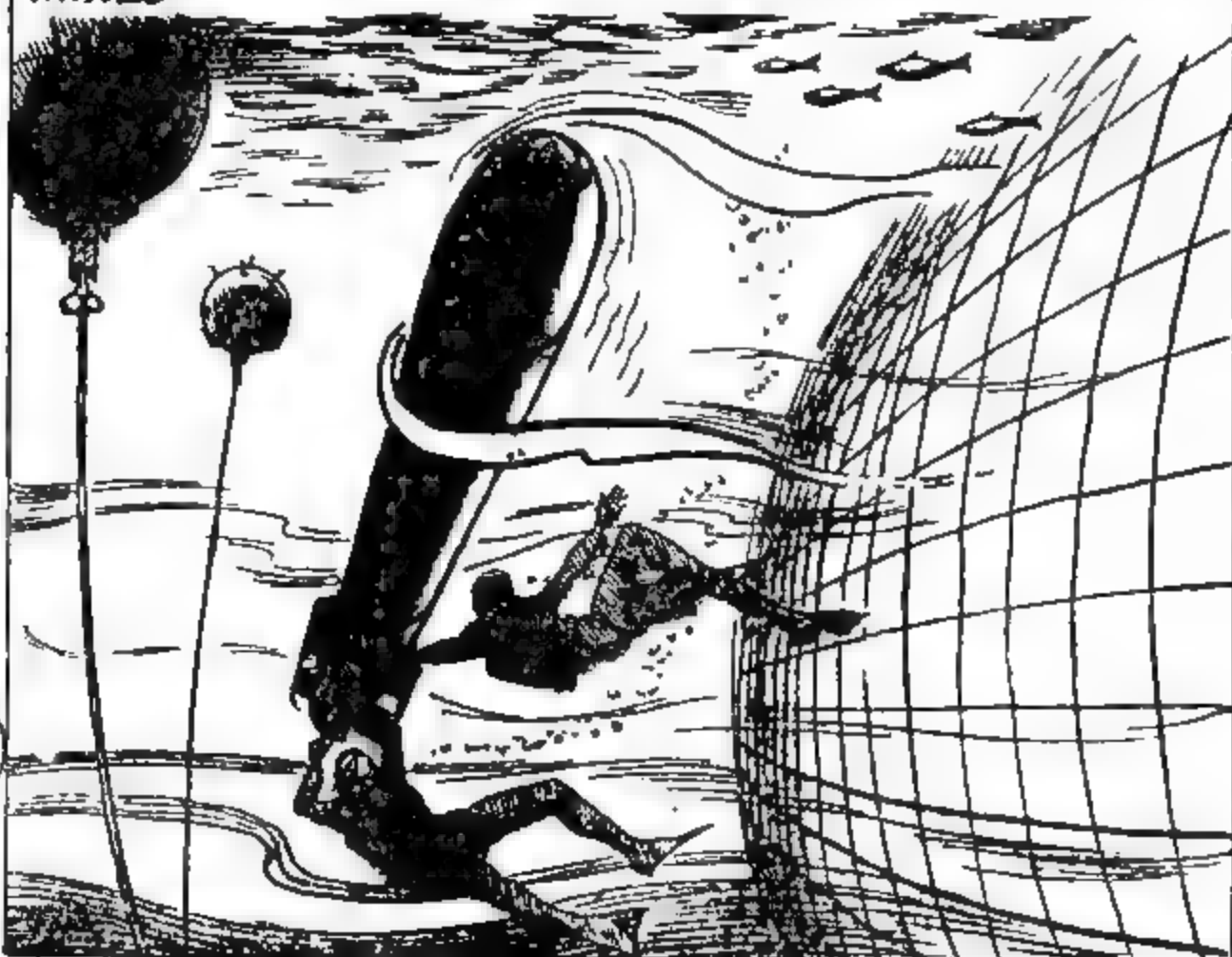
LOOK OUT, NOBBY!

THE NEXT MOMENT THE TORPEDO SLAMMED FULL TILT INTO A STEEL MESH THAT WAS STRETCHED ACROSS THE HARBOUR MOUTH

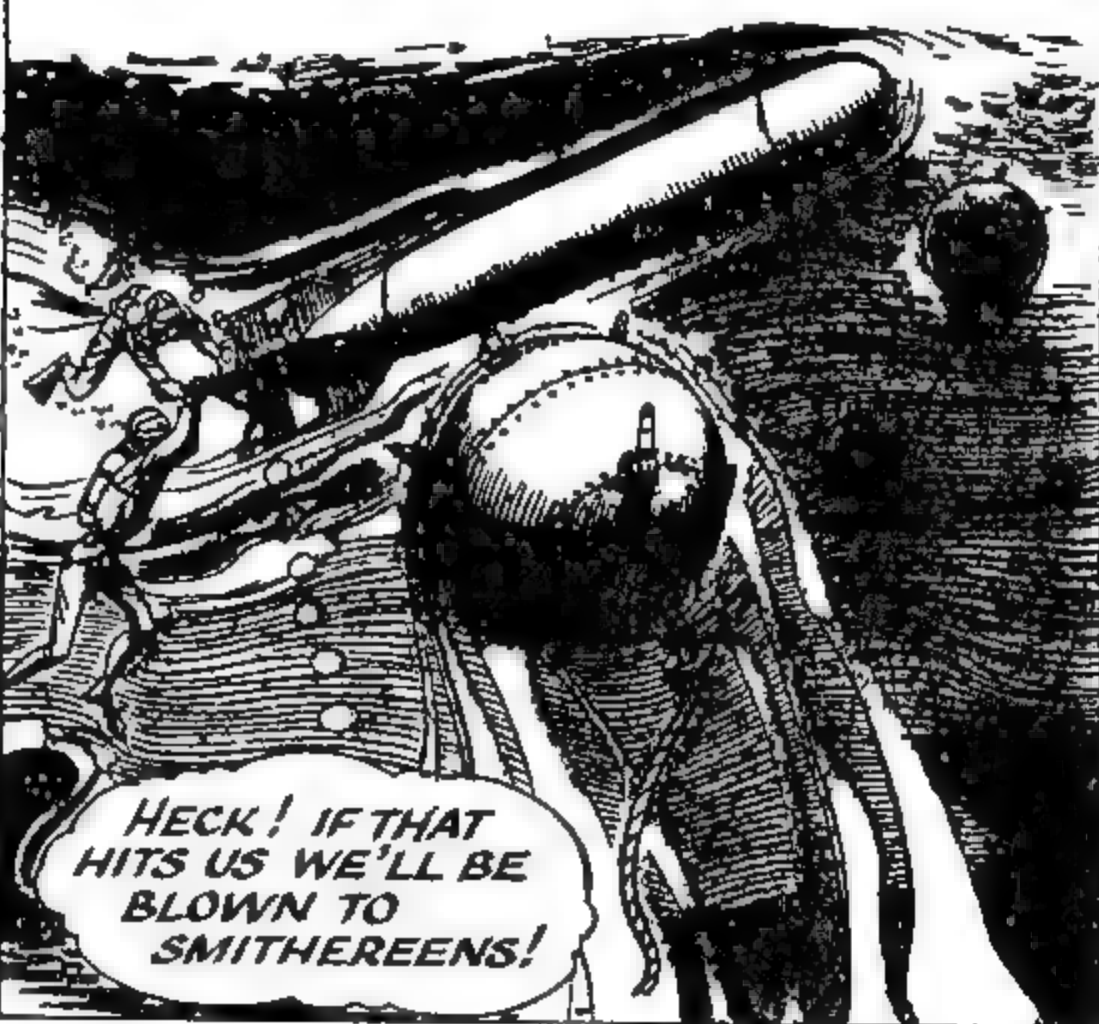


HECK! IT'S A NET! NAVAL INTELLIGENCE COULDN'T HAVE KNOWN ABOUT THIS. THEY DIDN'T WARN US

THE GREAT TORPEDO REBOUNDED—WHILE THE PALS FOUGHT MADLY TO REGAIN CONTROL AMID THE DEADLY MINES

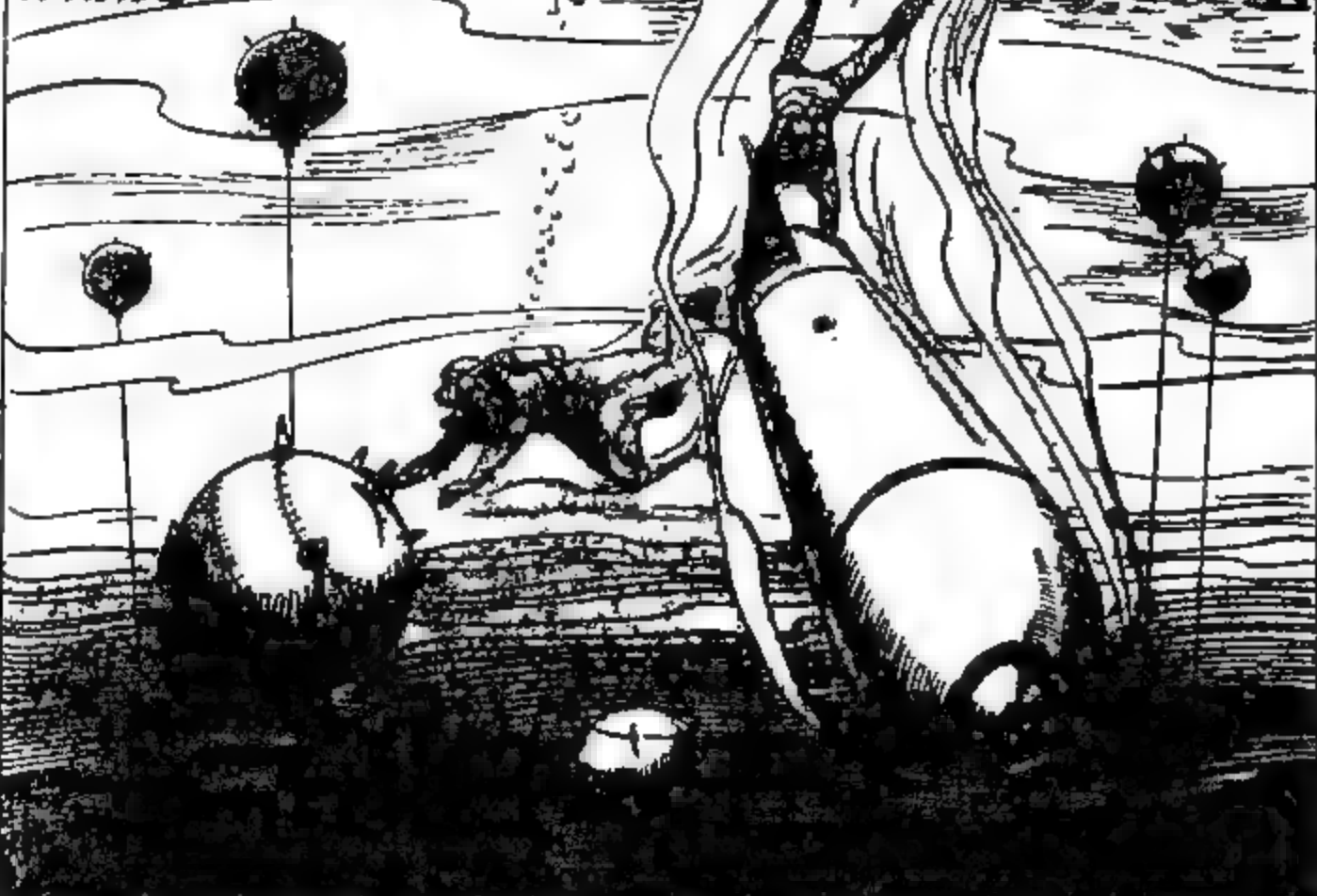


ONE OF THE MINES WAS TORN OFF ITS CABLE. BERT GASPED AS IT SWUNG IN TOWARDS THEM



HECK! IF THAT HITS US WE'LL BE BLOWN TO SMITHEREENS!

WITH A DESPERATE LUNGE HE HURLED HIMSELF AT IT, AND, USING EVERY OUNCE OF HIS STRENGTH, PUSHED BETWEEN THE DEADLY HORNS AND FORCED IT ASIDE



AFTER A TERRIFIC STRUGGLE NOBBY MANAGED TO GAIN CONTROL OF THE HUGE TORPEDO. THEN---



WE'RE UP AGAINST IT NOW, BY HECK. WE DON'T STAND A DOG'S CHANCE OF GETTING THROUGH THAT NET. BUT WE'VE GOT TO REACH THE NAZI SUBMARINE PEN SOMEHOW. WE'LL HEAD BACK TO SEA AND TRY TO THINK UP ANOTHER SCHEME

NOBBY AND BERT GUIDED THE TORPEDO CLEAR OF THE MINES AND OUT OF THE HARBOUR MOUTH



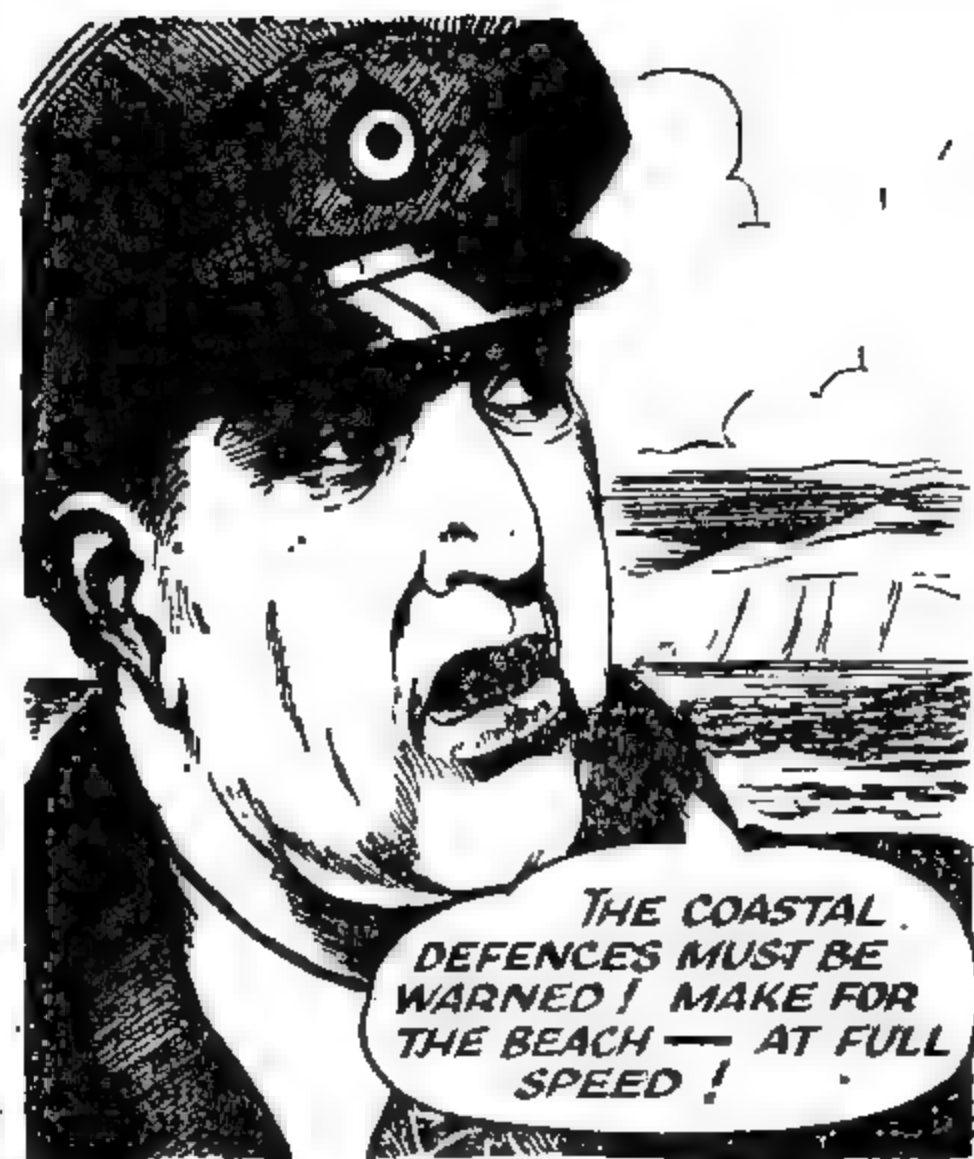
LITTLE DID THEY KNOW THAT THE LOOSE MINE HAD SURFACED



AND NEARBY, A PATROLLING NAZI LAUNCH HEAVED TO

HERR LEUTNANT!
LOOK! A MINE HAS
COME ADrift!

DONNER UND BLITZEN! THE
MINES WERE INSPECTED ONLY
YESTERDAY, AND THEY WERE
ALL RIGHT THEN. THIS IS
MIGHTY SUSPICIOUS. I MUST
REPORT IT AT ONCE



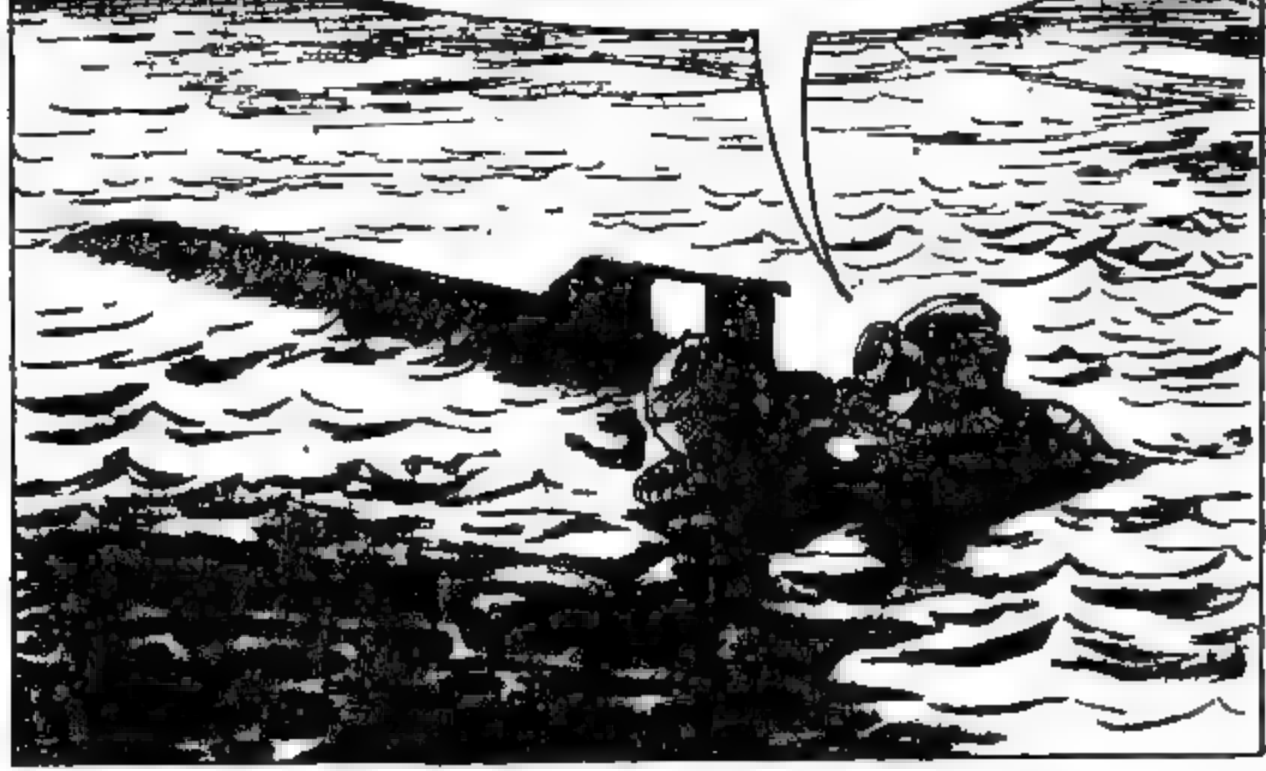
THE COASTAL
DEFENCES MUST BE
WARNED! MAKE FOR
THE BEACH — AT FULL
SPEED!

THE NAZI LAUNCH ROARED AWAY AROUND THE HEAD-
LAND



MEANWHILE, NOBBY AND BERT HAD SURFACED WARILY
SEVERAL HUNDRED YARDS OFFSHORE

THAT CONFOUNDED STEEL NET BARS
THE WAY WE INTENDED TO GO. I WONDER
IF THERE'S ANY OTHER MEANS OF
GETTING THROUGH?



THEN, AS HE GAZED SHOREWARDS,
NOBBY'S FROWN SUDDENLY VANISHED

I'VE GOT IT! LOOK, BERT!
THE ANSWER'S OVER THERE!



ON THE NEARBY BEACH, THE NAZI SAILORS WERE MAN-
HANDLING THEIR LAUNCH ASHORE ON A TROLLEY

I HAVE A FEELING THAT THE
INFERNAL BRITISH MAY BE UP
TO THEIR TRICKS! I WILL DRIVE
AT ONCE TO WARN DEFENCE HEAD-
QUARTERS. BRING THE LAUNCH
ASHORE AND STAND GUARD OVER IT!

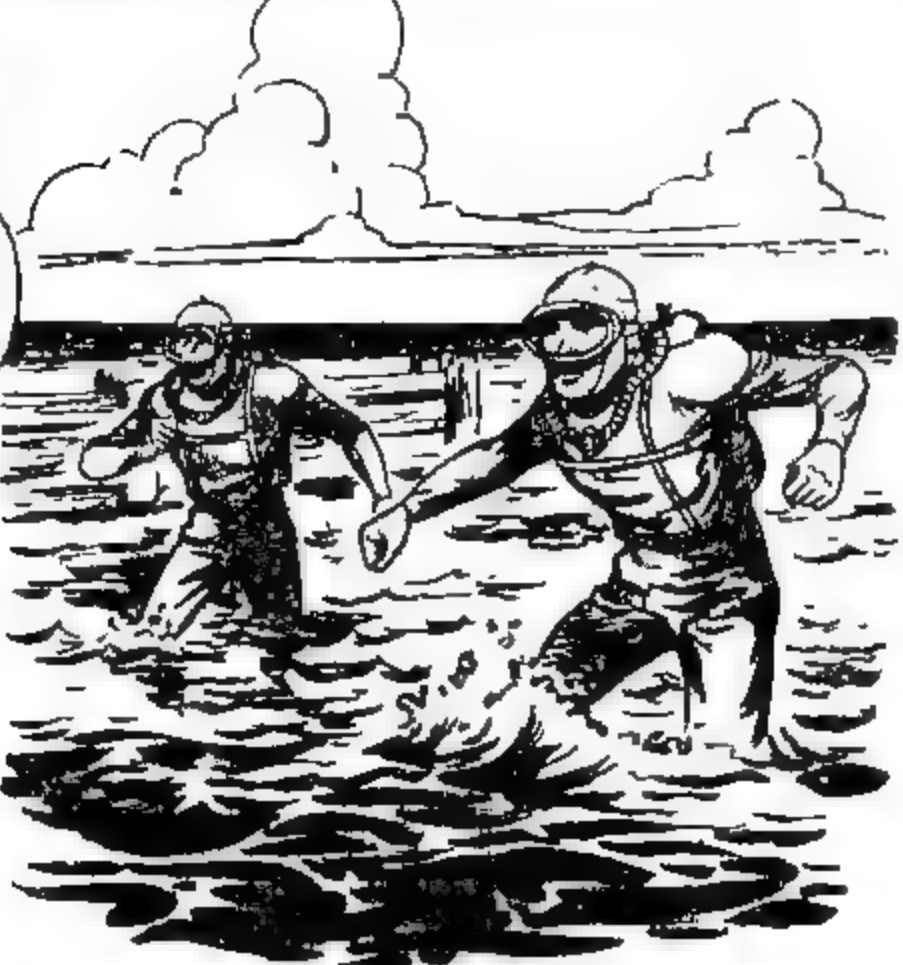


STEALTHILY THE TWO PALS GLIDED SHOREWARDS AND TETHERED THE TORPEDO TO A GROINE



THAT TROLLEY WOULD BE JUST THE JOB FOR TRANSPORTING THE TORPEDO TO THE INNER HARBOUR. I RECKON WE COULD THEN NIP INTO THE SUBMARINE PEN—WITHOUT ANYONE SPOTTING US. COME ON, BERT—AND NOT A SOUND!

WITH EVERY NERVE TAUT THEY CREPT NEARER AND NEARER TO THE NAZI SAILORS



THEN NOBBY RAPPED A COMMAND



AT 'EM, PAL! LAY 'EM OUT!

ACHTUNG! ENGLANDER FROGMEN!

BEFORE THE NAZI COULD GATHER THEIR WITS, NOBBY AND BERT WERE SLAMMING INTO THEM



HOLD THAT, YOU SQUAREHEAD!

TAKEN COMPLETELY BY SURPRISE, THE ENEMY WERE SWIFTLY KNOCKED COLD



THAT'S SETTLED THAT LITTLE BUNCH! NOW TO TIP THE LAUNCH OFF THE TROLLEY

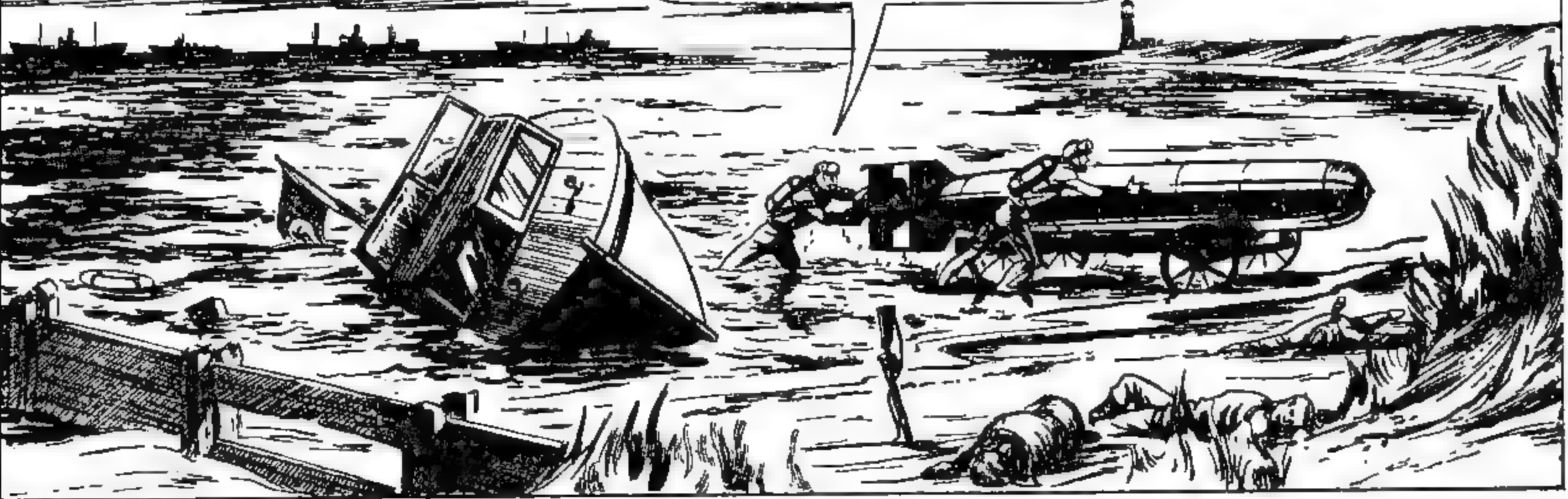
THE PALS HEAVED UPWARDS WITH ALL THEIR MIGHT



SHE'S TOPPLING! WE'VE GOT HER GOING!

LEAVING THE LAUNCH STRANDED IN THE SHALLOWS, THE TWO MARINES MANOEUVRED THE GIANT TORPEDO ON TO THE TROLLY

GREAT WORK, NOBBY! THIS IS JUST THE TRANSPORT WE NEEDED. WE'LL BE ACROSS TO THE INNER HARBOUR IN NEXT TO NO TIME



BEFORE LONG THEY WERE BUMPING OVER GRASS AND SAND DUNES

PHEW! TOUGH WORK! BUT NOT FAR TO GO NOW!



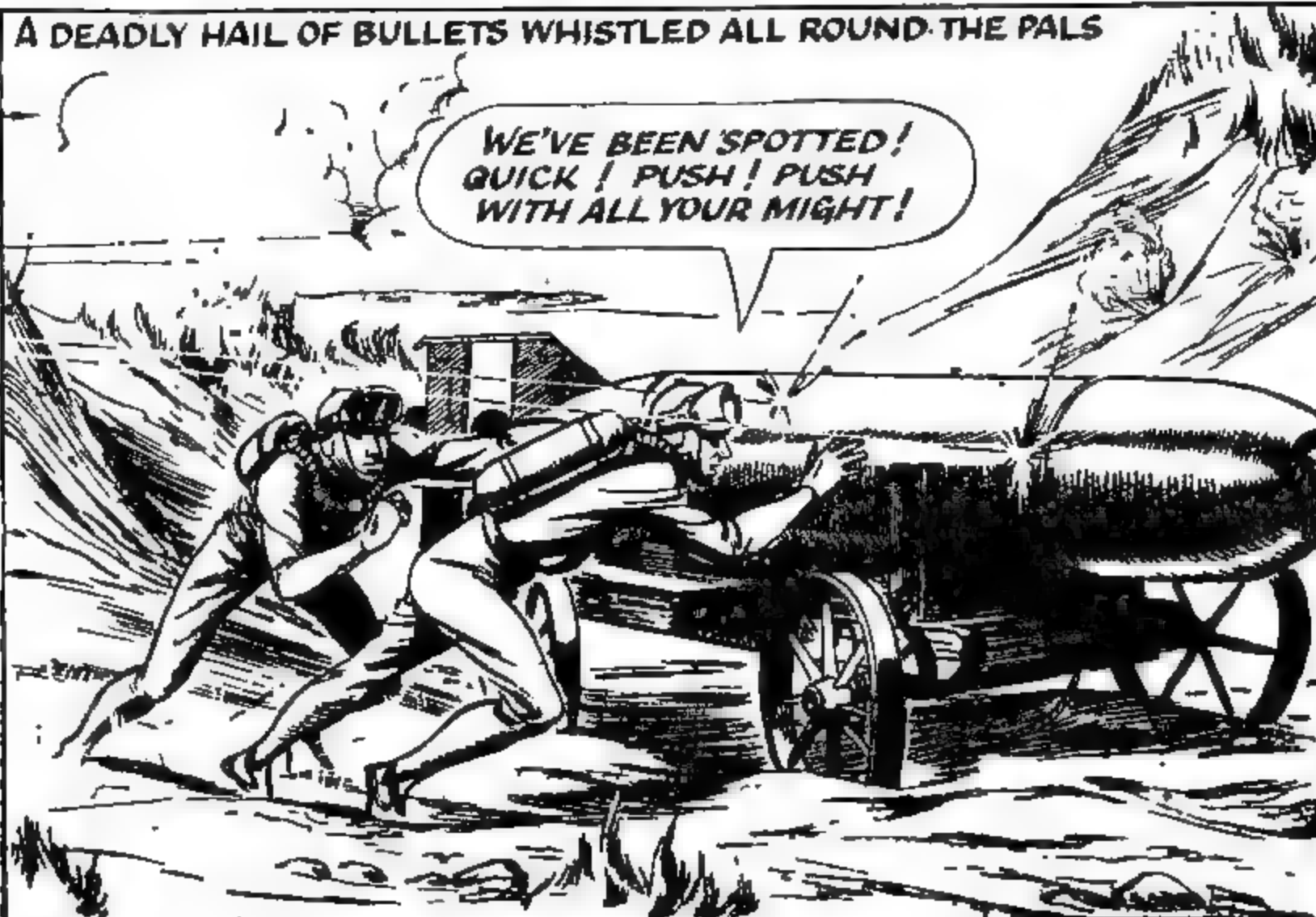
IT WAS A MOMENT LATER THAT THE CREW OF AN ENEMY MACHINE-GUN POST SIGHTED THE PALS!

ACH! ENGLANDER FROGMEN! OPEN FIRE!

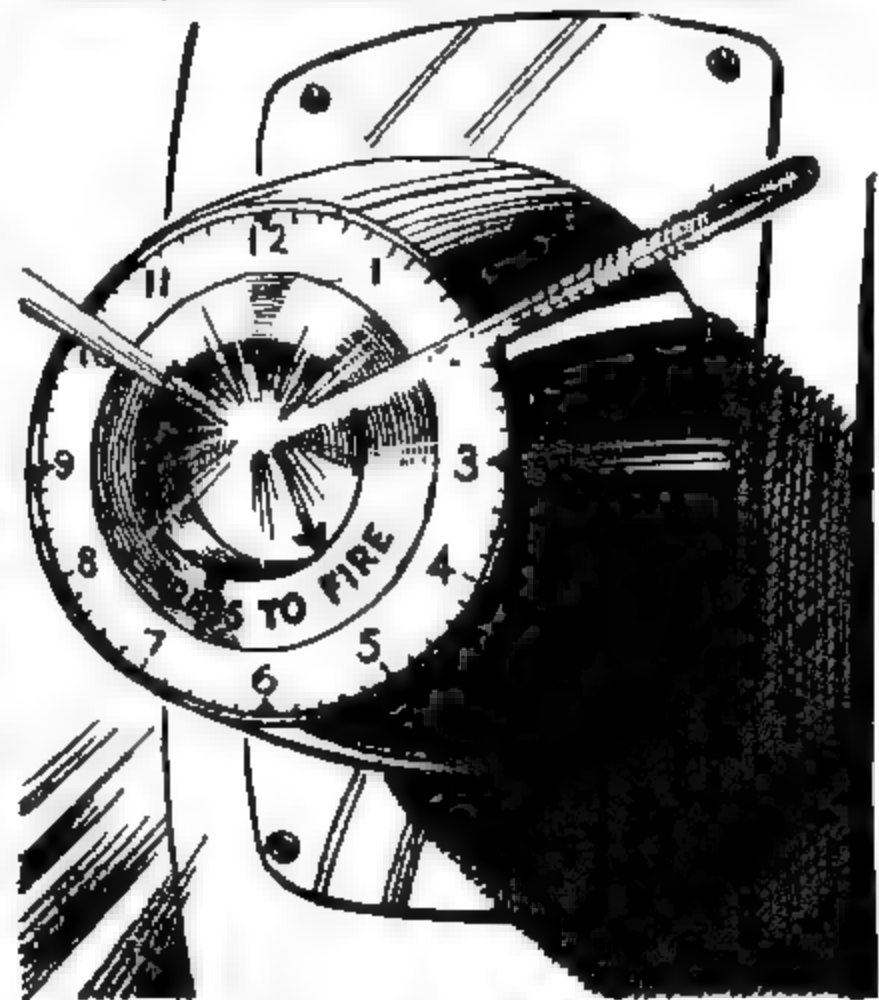


A DEADLY HAIL OF BULLETS WHISTLED ALL ROUND THE PALS

WE'VE BEEN SPOTTED! QUICK! PUSH! PUSH WITH ALL YOUR MIGHT!



THEN ONE UNLUCKY BULLET SPANGED IN — TO MAKE A DIRECT HIT ON THE FIRING BUTTON OF THE HUGE TORPEDO!



GREAT THUNDER! THE FUSE HAS STARTED WORKING. LISTEN TO THAT TICKING! SHE'LL BLOW SKY-HIGH IN EXACTLY FIVE MINUTES FROM NOW! WE MUST GET WEAVING — QUICK!

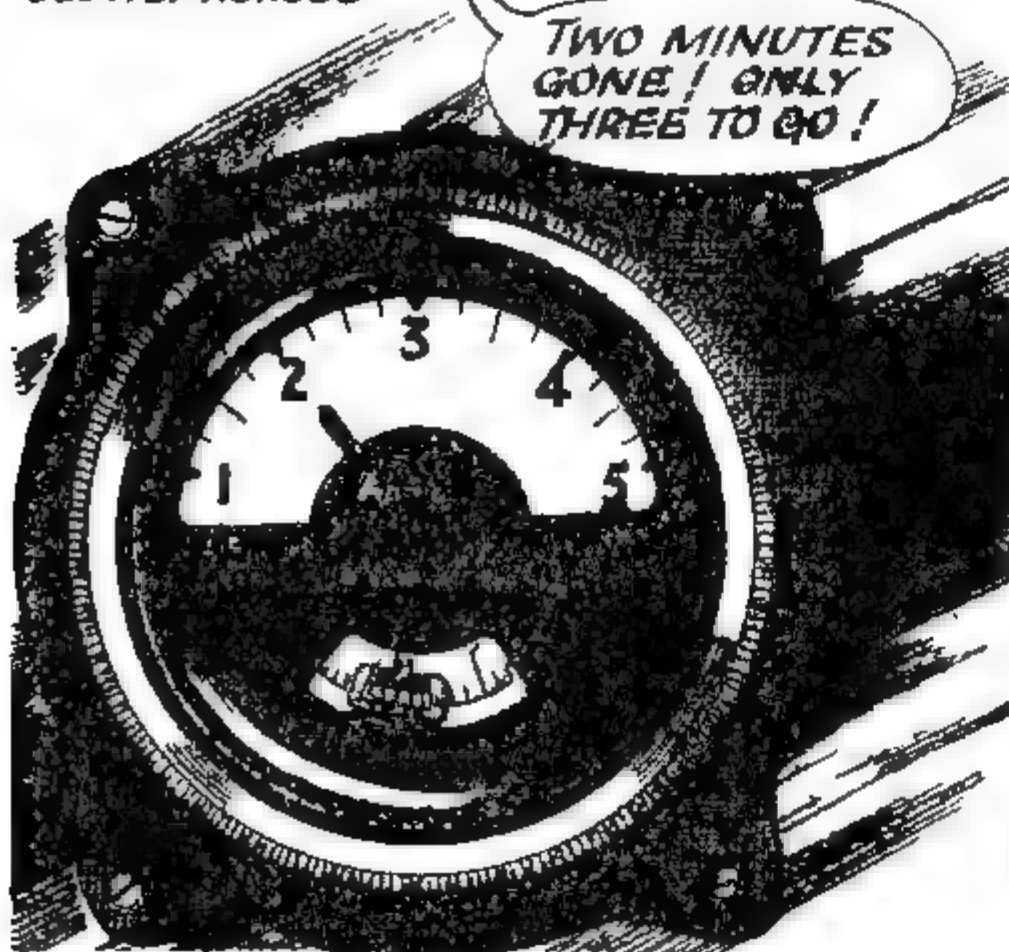


INSTANTLY THE PALS RUSHED THE TORPEDO DOWN INTO THE WATERS OF THE INNER HARBOUR, IGNORING THE BULLETS THAT SCREAMED PAST THEM

FASTER! NOT A SECOND TO LOSE! WE'VE GOT TO REACH THE SUBMARINE PEN BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE

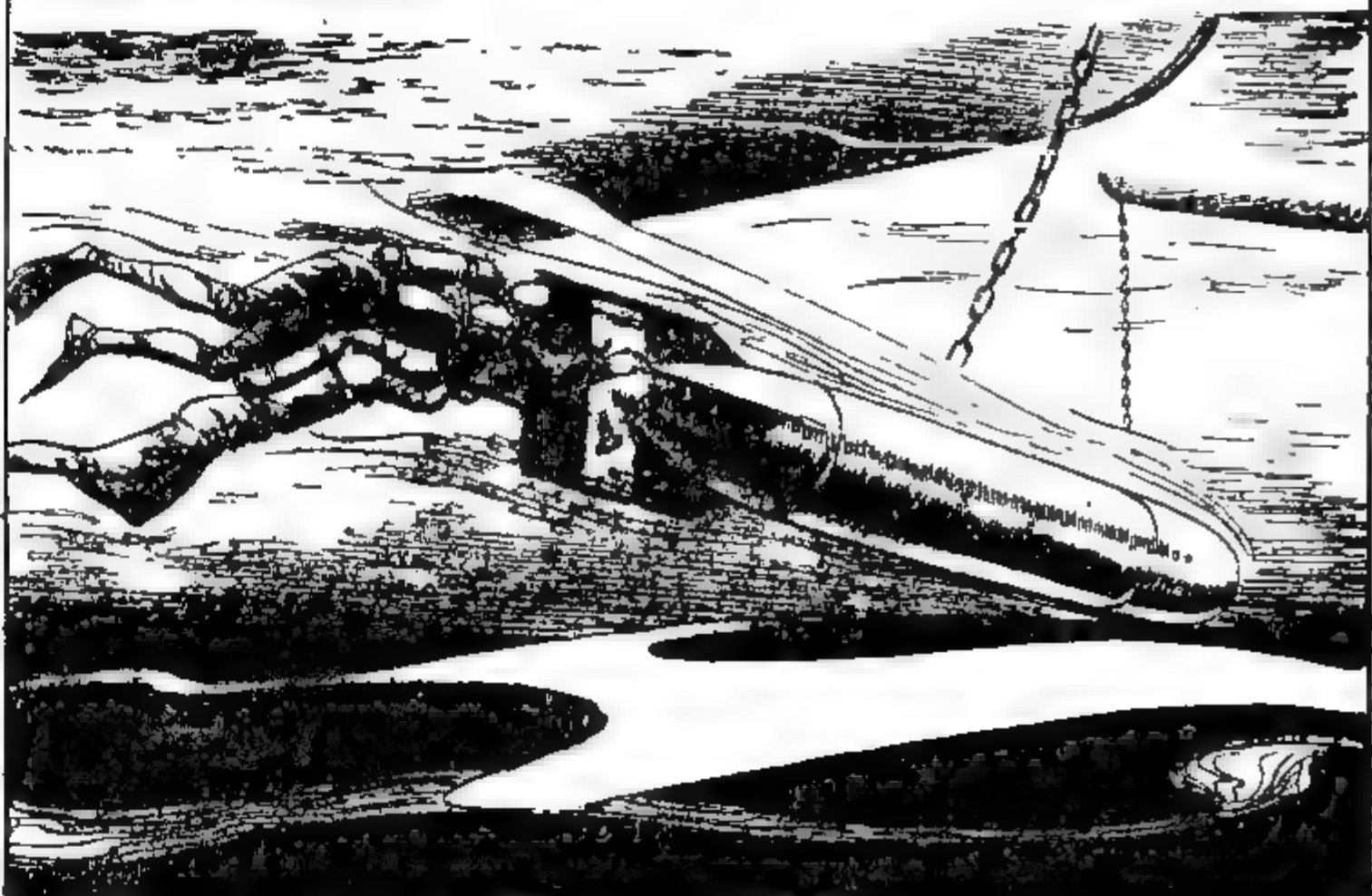


THEY PLUNGED UNDERWATER AND STARTED THE ELECTRIC MOTORS. MEANWHILE, THE NEEDLE OF THE TICKING TIME-FUSE CREPT SLOWLY ACROSS

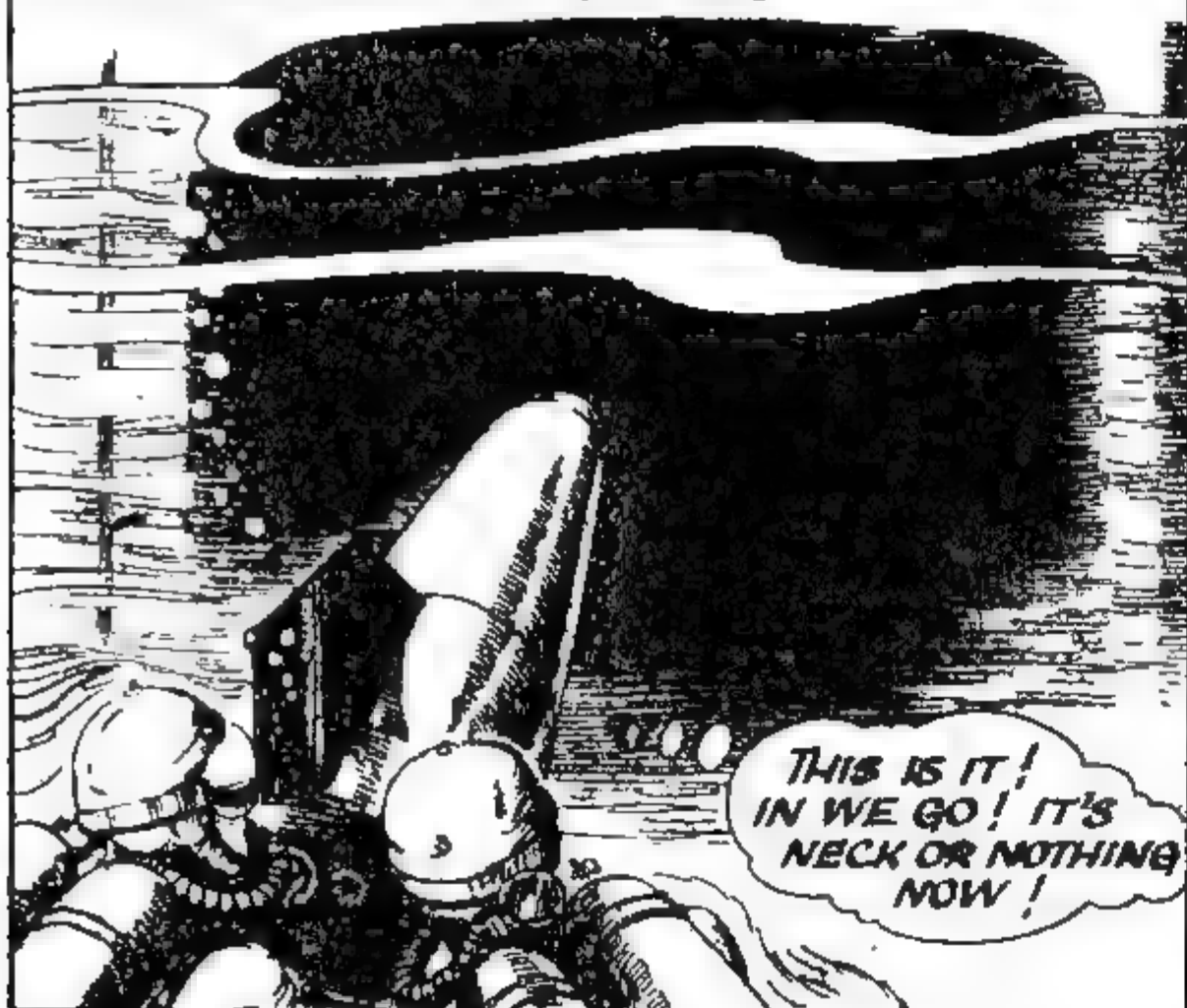


TWO MINUTES GONE! ONLY THREE TO GO!

RECKLESS OF THEIR OWN DANGER, DETERMINED TO CARRY OUT THEIR VITAL MISSION, THE DAUNTLESS FROGMEN FLASHED ALONG UNDERWATER

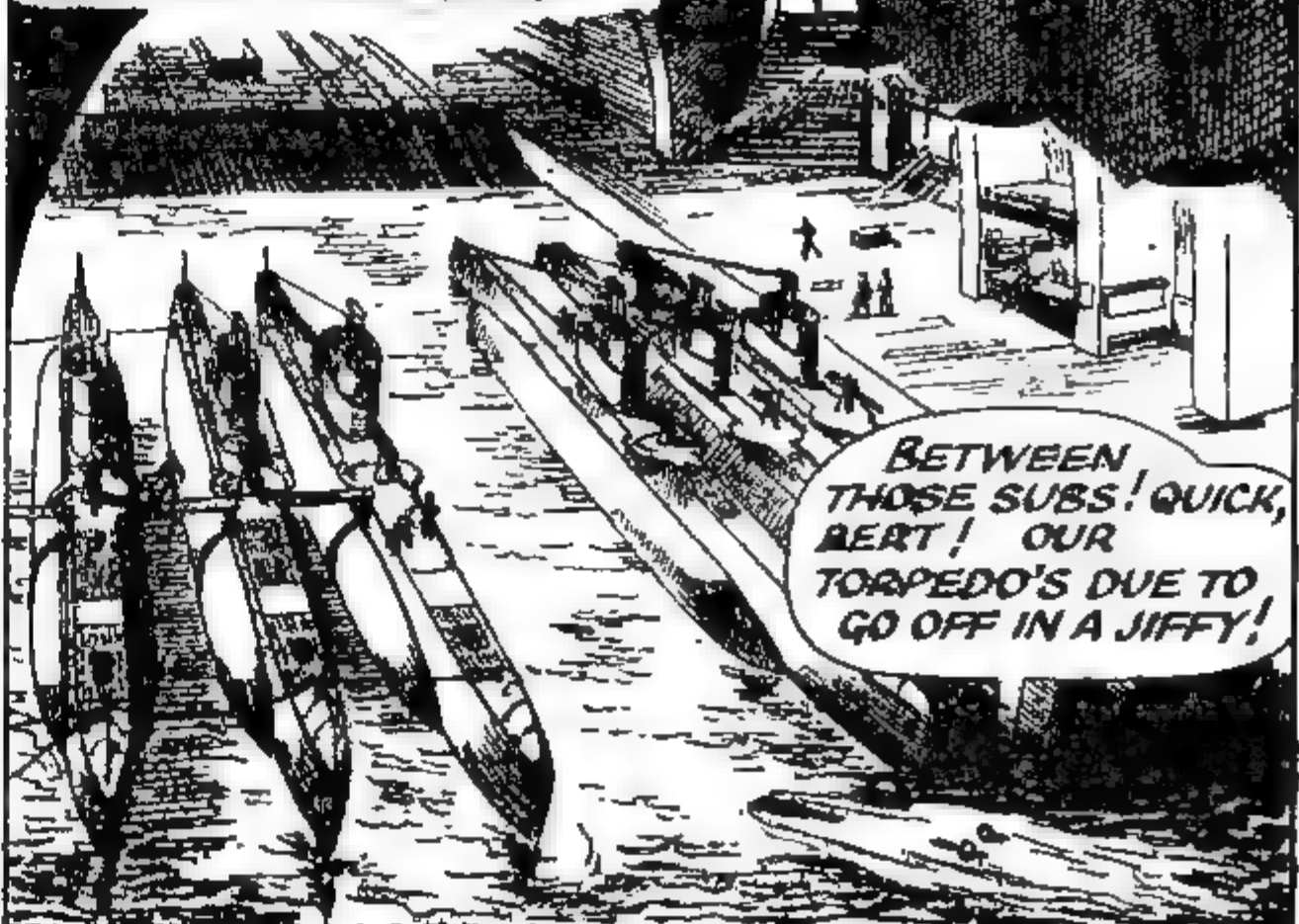


SOON THE DARK, GAPING TUNNEL OF THE SUBMARINE PEN LOOMED AHEAD



THIS IS IT! IN WE GO! IT'S NECK OR NOTHING NOW!

THEY ROSE INSIDE THE HUGE CONCRETE-COVERED HARBOUR, WHERE SIX SPECIAL LONG-RANGE SUBMARINES WERE PREPARING TO GET OUT ON ANOTHER MISSION OF DEATH AND DESTRUCTION



BETWEEN THOSE SUBS! QUICK, BERT! OUR TORPEDO'S DUE TO GO OFF IN A JIFFY!

HARDLY HAD THE TWO MARINES TURNED TO SWIM AWAY AT TOP SPEED THAN THEY WERE SEEN BY A NAZI

THEY'RE ENGLANDERS. THEY'VE PLANTED AN EXPLOSIVE! RUN FOR YOUR LIVES!

NOBBY AND BERT EMERGED FROM THE UNDERWATER TUNNEL, SCRAMBLED ASHORE, AND RACED FOR COVER



THEN THE THUNDER OF A GIGANTIC EXPLOSION ROCKED THE SEAPORT AS THE NAZI SUBMARINE PEN WAS BLOWN TO SMITHEREENS!

WE'VE DONE THE TRICK, CHUM! THERE SHE GOES!

BY GINGER — THAT'S KNOCKED 'EM FOR SIX, PAL! NOW TO GET OUT OF HERE — BEFORE THEY START HUNTING FOR US!



FIVE MINUTES LATER THE TWO MARINES PLUNGED FROM A CLIFFTOP

BEFORE LONG, SAFELY ABOARD THE BRITISH DESTROYER, NOBBY AND BERT RECEIVED THE WARM CONGRATULATIONS OF THE NAVAL COMMANDER. AND AS THE WARSHIP SET OFF HOMEWARDS, A PILLAR OF BLACK SMOKE ROSE HIGH INTO THE SKY FROM THE SUBMARINE BASE

A BRAVE AND MAGNIFICENT JOB OF WORK, MEN! THE NAVY IS PROUD OF YOU!

THANK YOU, SIR. IT WAS PRETTY HOT WHILE IT LASTED. BUT I GUESS IT WAS WELL WORTH IT, EH, BERT?

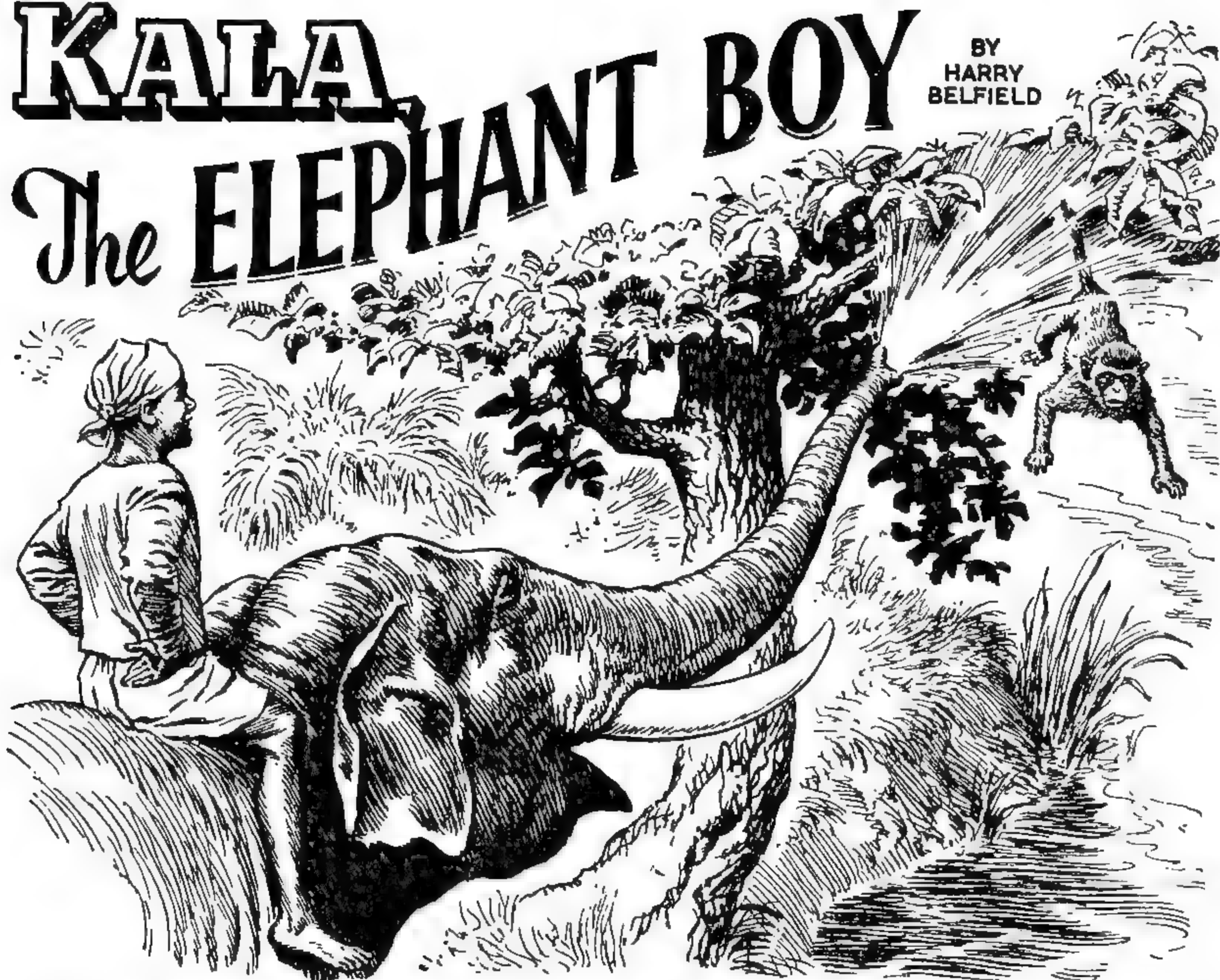
IT SURE WAS, NOBBY.



The END

KALA The ELEPHANT BOY

BY
HARRY
BELFIELD



CHUMS OF THE TEAK FOREST

JUST one more log, Bhang," urged Kala, the elephant boy. "Then all is done and we can go home."

Kala and Bhang the elephant were at work in the Burmese jungle. Kala was a native lad, and he was the youngest oozie—as those in charge of the elephants are called—on the plantation owned by the white man, Mr. Brooks.

Bhang was the biggest and strongest elephant for many leagues around.

Day by day he dragged the huge teak logs down to the river, where they were floated to the sawmills far downstream.

Kala was very proud of his elephant pal. And Bhang thought the world of Kala. They had grown up together, and Kala had ridden on Bhang's broad back long before the elephant had been set to work on the plantation. Of course, as soon as Kala was old enough, he had been made Bhang's oozie—and he didn't ask for more than that!

He couldn't be happier than with Bhang—and his other animal pal, Sim the monkey!

Sim was as mischievous as a monkey can be. He wasn't big and couldn't work like Bhang. But he kept Kala in fits of laughter with his comic antics, and he made the hours pass very quickly in the big, lonely teak forests.

Right now, Sim had wandered off somewhere, while Bhang sent the massive log splashing into the river with a last push.

"There!" said Kala. "Now we can go back to the village. The white master will be pleased. Where is Sim?"

As he spoke there was a rustle among the branches of a big tree overhanging the river bank. Then from among them fell a large nut the size of a football.

It just missed Kala, perched on Bhang's neck, and struck the elephant right between the eyes.

Of course it was only like a feather-tap to Bhang, because his hide was so thick!

Then another came—and another. A fourth glanced off Bhang's forehead and skimmed past his eye.

His Four-footed Pal Would Have to be Sold Unless He Unmasked a Thief

But all the notice Bhang took of them was to dip his trunk into the river.

More nuts rained down from the tree.

Suddenly Bhang went into action. Up swung his trunk with terrific speed. Then—swoosh! A jet of water streamed from its tip with the force of a fire hose and went splashing into the tree. From the tree came a startled shriek. Next moment a small, furry shape somersaulted from among the leaves and landed with a splash in the river.

It was Sim the monkey!

Before he sank a second time Bhang snatched him out and swung him on to his own broad shoulders.

Sim chattered indignantly.

"Serves you right!" chuckled Kala. "You shouldn't tease Bhang. Now there is no need to wait any longer. Home, Bhang!"

The elephant did not need to be told twice. Turning, he ambled along the jungle path.

Kala and Sim rode happily on his back.

They were nearing the cluster of plantation buildings when suddenly a loud explosion echoed through the jungle, startling the birds in the tree-tops.

"What is that?" cried Kala in alarm. "It came from the white master's dwelling."

Even as he spoke a faint shout for help came to their ears.

"That was the master's voice," gasped Kala. "He is in trouble. Hurry, Bhang!"

He hammered with his bare heels behind the elephant's ears, and Bhang stormed along the jungle path like a charging tank. Nothing could stop him. He tore up bushes by the roots and shouldered aside huge trees, and it was only a few minutes before they came in sight of the palm-thatched bungalow where Mr. Brooks lived.

At another command Bhang curved back his trunk and swung Kala gently to the ground, while Sim leapt down on his own.

"Help!"

A further hoarse shout came from the bungalow as they sprang across the verandah.

Kala rushed into the living room, which Mr. Brooks also used as an office. The reek of explosive still hung in the air, and a safe was wide open, with a massive door hanging crookedly on its hinges. But Kala gave that only a glance. Then his gaze switched to a motionless figure in white sprawled on the floor, beside the overturned desk.

"It is the master!" he wailed. "He is dead!"

But Mr. Brooks was far from being dead. As Kala bent over him, he stirred feebly, and a minute later, with the elephant boy's help, he was able to sit up.

"What has happened, master?" asked Kala—and waved a hand round the wrecked room. "Who did this?"

"Wish I knew!" groaned the planter. "All I know is that I came back here, and I was greeted by a terrific bang."

"We heard it in the jungle, master," put in Kala gravely. "Bhang came as fast as he could—and that is fast indeed! But would it had been faster."

The white man said nothing. He had seen the open safe, and a frown darkened his face.

Leaping across to it, he groped among the disordered mass of papers within.

"It's the way I thought!" he snapped. "It was a thief I surprised."

"A thief, master!"

Mr. Brooks nodded grimly.

"He blew open the safe. He must have known that inside were a month's wages for every man-jack employed on the estate. I drew it from the bank only yesterday, and put it in the safe here. Now every penny has gone," ended the white master bitterly.

Kala stared, horrified.

"You may well look upset," went on Mr. Brooks. "Your wages have gone—like everybody else's."

"Master, I care nothing for that," declared Kala. "Bhang and I are willing to work for our keep alone."

"That's good of you, Kala—but everyone won't feel as you do about it."

The white man shook his head regretfully.

"You alone can't save the place, Kala," he went on. "I don't mind telling you—I can't stand the loss of that money. Everything will have to be sold up—including Bhang."

"Bhang, master!"

Mr. Brooks bit his lip.

"I'm sorry, Kala! But that's how it is. Bhang will have to go—unless, of course, the money is recovered."

Kala stared blankly. He just couldn't think of the jungle without his elephant pal!

There was only one way to prevent the separation. He had to find the thief—and recover the money!

But—how was he to begin?

THE MONKEY FINDS A CLUE—BY MISTAKE!

KALA could find no quick answer to that question.

He was alone in the room when suddenly he heard a rustling sound overhead.

Looking up, he saw his monkey pal investigating a hole which the explosion had blown in the thatched roof.

Kala gave a cry of dismay.

"Come down, Sim!" he called sternly. "The white master will think you have torn the hole in the roof. He will be very angry. Come down at once."

The monkey was almost startled out of its wits

at hearing Kala speak in that stern voice. He jumped into the hole, dislodging a shower of debris and thatch that pattered down on Kala's upturned face. More thatch came raining down as Sim wriggled through the hole and scampered up on to the roof-top, where he felt safe.

Kala shook his fist at the monkey.

"Worthless one!" he cried. "You have made the hole bigger. It will be harder to mend now, and—and—"

His words trailed away. He was gazing down at a pile of debris on the floor—the rubbish that Sim the monkey had dislodged from the roof.

Suddenly he stooped and from among the debris picked out a charred scrap of cardboard. Kala examined it excitedly. Its blackened edge showed that it had been in the explosion that had blown open the safe. It could have been hurled into the roof by the force of that explosion, Kala thought.

And that wasn't all!

Its shape was familiar. Many a time had Kala seen similar objects. Yes, it was part of the cardboard container in which the explosive used by the thief had been stored.

Kala knew that, on the neighbouring plantation, just such explosives were used to uproot giant trees.

"The thief could have come from there," he exclaimed breathlessly.

Kala's first thought was to show the clue to Mr. Brooks. But he feared that the white master would think it of no account and merely laugh at him.

"No!" he said to himself. "It is better that Bhang and I go there ourselves, and find out what is to be learned."

He hurried outside where Bhang was waiting.

"We must catch the thief, Bhang," he whispered, fondling the elephant's trunk. "If we fail, the white master will sell you, and we shall be parted."

It almost seemed as if Bhang understood, for he slipped his trunk affectionately round Kala's slim shoulders.

Then, at Kala's command, he put out his trunk for Kala to step upon and swung the boy up to his broad back. Perched there, Kala glimpsed Sim the monkey watching ruefully from the roof-top.

"You can come down, O son of mischief!" Kala called to him. "This time I shall not punish you, for you have done me a great service. Here is your reward."

Kala temptingly held out a ripe banana, and Sim scampered down the roof with a squeal of delight.

A minute later the three pals were hurrying through the jungle bound for the next plantation, which was run by a white man named Hendriks. Kala had never liked him very much. For one thing Hendriks was the exact opposite to Mr. Brooks. He was cruel to everybody on the estate, animals as well as humans. Besides, Kala didn't

like his looks. He had blond, spiky hair—pale, close-set eyes—and a mouth like a rat-trap. And, when he spoke, his voice reminded Kala of the roar of a tiger.

At any other time the elephant boy would have thought twice about going near Hendriks' bungalow. But, just now, he would have dared anything to prevent the threatened parting from Bhang.

Kala was still racking his brains for a plan when suddenly Bhang halted, waving his trunk to and fro and sniffing at the air.

"So you have scented something!" muttered Kala, recognising the signs. "Maybe it is a tiger—or maybe a human."

He broke off, excitement showing on his face. A sudden thought had come to him.

A human!

Could it be that they had overtaken the thief in his flight from Mr. Brooks' office? Bhang had travelled fast—far faster than a human being could have done!

"We must make sure!" said Kala under his breath. "But we must also be wary. Onward, Bhang! And tread carefully, for it is better that he does not hear us."

Despite his great size, Bhang could move with surprising speed and silence. He seemed to recognise the need for both now. Not a stick cracked and hardly a branch rustled as Bhang strode along the jungle path, turning aside at the bottom of a steep slope. There the scent was stronger. It led them to a level stretch of bright green grass.

But that level meadow was not all it seemed!

Half-way across it a native was caught fast. Already he had sunk in it beyond his knees, and at every movement black, evil-looking mud welled up around him and he sank deeper and deeper.

It was a swamp—and the man was trapped!

Bhang had stopped at its edge, unable to take another stride in safety. The trapped native was several yards away—still far beyond their reach.

Kala thought fast. He could not remain there and watch the man being dragged down to his death. He'd got to do something. But—what?

"If only I had a rope!" he told himself.

Then he realized that Sim the monkey was no longer with him.

Arms outstretched, Sim had taken a flying leap into the branches of a tree growing beside the swamp.

Now he was swinging back and forth on a long rope-like liana.

Kala clapped his hands. His monkey pal was very wise indeed! That liana would make a fine rope!

"Give!" he called out in Burmese and held out his hands to receive it.

Sim understood. Kala caught the liana deftly as it came snaking through the air. Swiftly he hacked it free with his knife. Then he fashioned a noose in one end and sent it streaking out towards the native who now was down to his waist in the swamp.

For a fraction of a second the noose hung over the man's head. Then it dropped around his shoulders, and Kala jerked it tight. A moment later he had knotted his end of the rope to one of Bhang's tusks.

"Pull!" he commanded.

Bhang flung himself backward. The liana went taut, and twanged like a fiddle string. For an instant Kala thought the rope would break under the mighty strain.

But—no!

Inch by inch the native was pulled from the swamp. Finally he came out like a cork from a bottle, and as Bhang dragged him to the side, Kala slithered to the ground, running to give him a hand.

"Thanks, brother!" panted the native, salaaming till his forehead touched the ground. "My life is yours. You and your friends have assuredly saved me from death. Is there aught I can do in return?"

"Yes."

Kala's answer came swiftly. He had remembered suddenly why he was there—to find the thief and save Bhang from being sold. If the other could help him do that, it would indeed be a worthy return!

Then a sudden thought checked him. Was it wise to confide in a stranger?

"Why were you in the jungle?" he asked instead.

The other seemed momentarily taken aback. Then he forced a smile.

"The jungle gives me life," he replied. "I am Juko, the bamboo cutter. I came here to cut bamboos for my master, and I fell into the swamp."

"Who is your master?" questioned Kala.

"Hendriks tuan."

Kala could not help a start. Also, the look in his eyes told that he had no love for Juko's master.

"He is a hard man," went on Juko. "But—who are you, saviour of my life?"

Kala told him—and told as well how Mr. Brooks' safe had been burgled and all his money stolen.

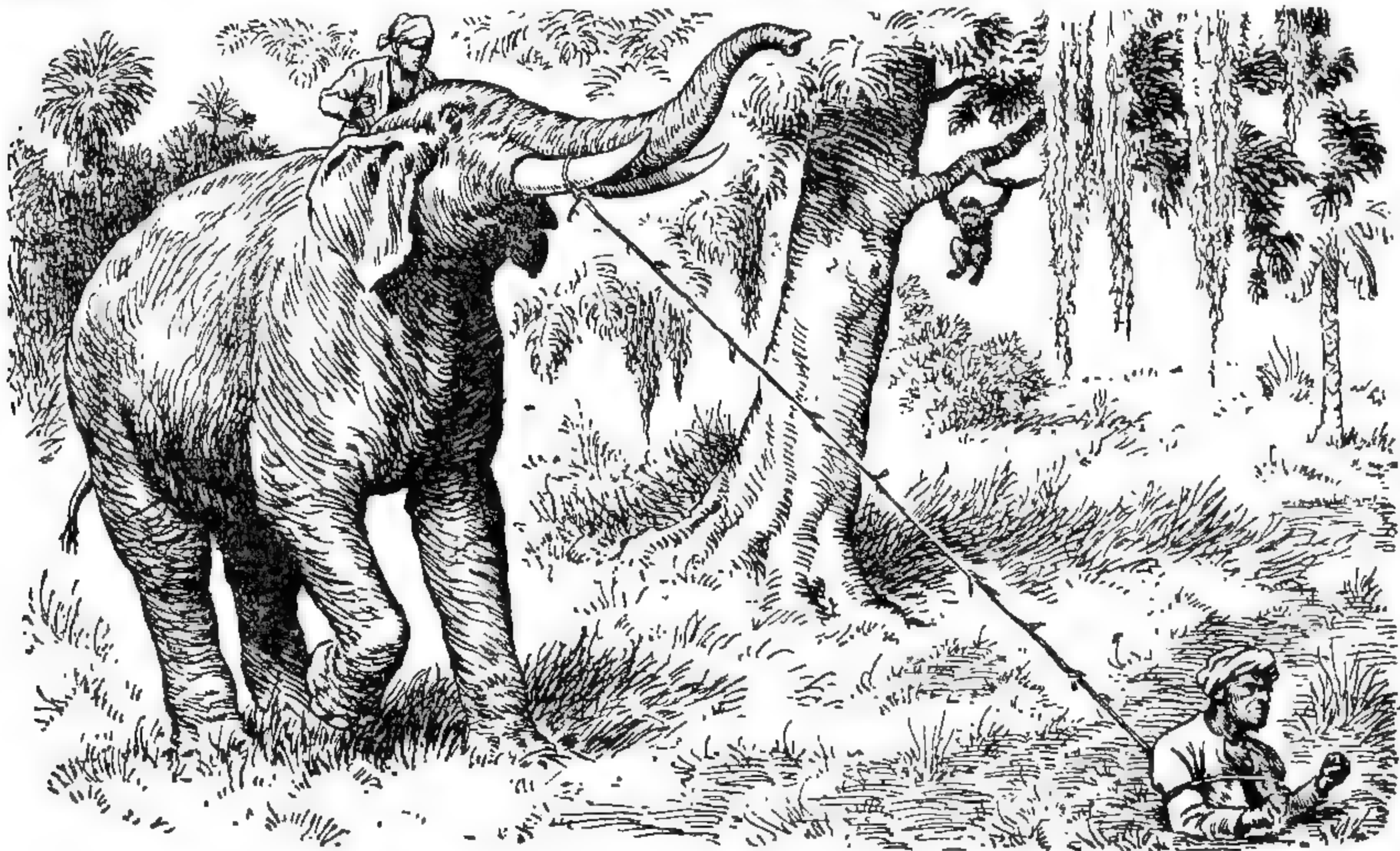
"I have sworn to find the thief," he ended. "He came this way, and we were hot on his tracks. Hast seen aught of him, Juko?"

For an instant the other's eyes slitted.

"I have seen nobody," he replied as the look passed. "But—hearken, son! Maybe I can help you. You say the thief came from the estate of Hendriks tuan?"

"Yes."

"You saved my life, my son. Therefore I am on your side. See! I will go back and make inquiries among my fellow-servants. Maybe the



"Pull!" commanded Kala. As the faithful elephant obeyed, the native was slowly drawn from out of the swamp. Little did Kala realise what the sequel would be!

thief will betray himself. Then I will meet you tonight and tell you my news. It is good?"

"Yes. Where shall I meet you? And when?"

Juko pondered, a satisfied smile in his eyes.

"Near to Mr. Hendriks' bungalow is a giant tree with red flowers," he continued. "You cannot miss it, for it is half as high again as all the other trees. Be beneath it at sunset, and I will come to you there."

"I'll be there," promised Kala.

And he was. Even in the semi-dark he had no difficulty in recognizing the tree. Leaving his pals a mile away, he waited in the shadows for Juko to appear.

The sun sank beneath the tree-tops. Now the darkness was like pitch.

Suddenly he heard a rustle near at hand.

"Is that you, Juko?" he whispered.

A black, shapeless figure loomed up beside him. It looked broader than Juko, he thought.

Before he could be certain, however, something hard jabbed into his side.

Without looking down, Kala knew it was a rifle—such as his white master sometimes used against dangerous animals.

Then a gruff voice roared a command.

"Stay put!"

Kala knew that, too. It was Hendriks' voice!

Kala was puzzled. Why was the planter there—and not Juko?

Even as he asked himself the question, Kala knew the answer.

"I was warned you meant to break into the bungalow," Hendriks went on, in a booming voice. "All right, Juko! You can come out. I've got him!"

Kala caught his breath as a second figure stepped from the blackness. This time there was no doubt about it being Juko.

With an evil laugh he put a hand on Kala's shoulder.

"Take him away and put him in prison," barked Hendriks. "I'll see the thieving rat is taught a lesson."

Juko laughed again. Kala gritted his teeth. He knew the truth now.

Juko had betrayed him!

SIM TO THE RESCUE

THERE was nothing Kala could do. Juko's grip had tightened on his shoulder, and the rifle was jabbing harder into his side.

"Don't try anything," warned Hendriks. "This trigger is mighty loose, and the gun's big enough to kill an elephant. Get going, you thieving rat!"

Kala bit back a hot retort. He knew that protests were useless. The one bright thing about the

situation was that Bhang and Sim still had their freedom.

What a good thing it was that he hadn't brought his four-legged pals with him!

A moment later he was not so sure. There was a rustle among the leafy branches immediately above his head.

Something told him that Sim the monkey was there, watching with bright, beady eyes, which could see in the dark like a cat's, all that was going on. He heard his four-footed pal twitter softly with rage. Then, unseen by Hendriks or Juko, something dangled from the tree.

It was Sim's long tail.

And that tail was as good as an extra hand to Sim!

Its end curled round the levelled rifle. Next moment there was a terrific roar from Hendriks. The rifle had been torn away from his shoulder and whisked away into the darkness.

It was such a tremendous roar that the startled Sim dropped the rifle in alarm. The gun hit the ground and exploded with an even louder crash. The bullet went screaming past Juko's ear, giving him a bigger fright than Sim had experienced and causing him to slacken his grip of Kala's shoulder.

With a lithe twist Kala tore himself free and sprang away into the darkness.

"Master! He has gone!" wailed the treacherous Juko.

"After him!" roared Hendriks. "After him, fool!"

Kala ran faster. He could not see where he was going, but the darkness helped him, too, since it hid him from his enemies' sight.

In a few minutes he reached the jungle where it was even blacker.

But he was no longer alone!

Suddenly there was a twittering beside him, and Sim landed lightly on his shoulder. After that it was easier, for the darkness did not trouble Sim at all. They went straight to the spot where Bhang waited.

It was only then that Kala realized he had failed in his search for the thief.

Or had he?

His thoughts raced as he fondled Bhang's trunk. Why had Juko turned traitor? he asked himself. Was it to make certain he could no longer continue his search?

But—why?

Suddenly the answer came to Kala.

"Maybe it is because he is the thief himself," Kala said to his pals.

The more Kala thought about it, the more certain he became that he had found the reason. It all fitted. Juko could have been on his way back to his own village when he had stumbled into the swamp. True, he had not got the stolen money

then. But he could have hidden it somewhere in the neighbourhood of the morass.

Yes, that was it! Kala was sure of it!

"We must go to the swamp and find the money," said Kala. "And the sooner the better, before he has time to find it himself. Come on!"

That was easier said than done, however. He had learned to make Bhang and Sim understand most things—but it was quite impossible to lead them to realize he wanted to go to the swamp. In fact, his pals thought the swamp was the last place he would wish to re-visit. So they made a wide detour to avoid it, and the darkness was so deep that Kala had soon lost his way.

And then there were other obstacles to contend with.

They were following a path through the jungle when they suddenly found themselves confronted by a deep ravine.

The bridge had been uprooted and thrown into the depths—and there was no other way across.

At least Kala thought so. But Bhang had other ideas.

Near the ravine was a tall tree, whose top seemed to reach right up to the starry sky.

Setting his bony forehead against it, the elephant pushed with all his might. At first the tree only quivered and bent. But Bhang thrust—and thrust again. Suddenly there was a splintering crash. The tree came up by its roots, fell across the ravine and rolled to a standstill.

It had formed a rough and slender bridge—and Bhang went across it with the surefootedness of a goat!

They went on.

Dawn found them still many miles from the swamp. Now Kala knew the way, though, and they could push on faster. But it was nearly two hours later when they came to the swamp. Kala's excitement grew. Was his hunch right? he wondered. Would he be in time?

In the next few minutes he knew the answers to both those questions.

His sharp eyes detected signs of recent digging on some rising ground near.

"Oye!" he exclaimed. "It was here the money was hidden. It is as I thought. Dig deep, and we shall find it, brothers," he ended excitedly.

They dug—far deeper than Juko had dug. But there was no sign of any money.

What could have happened to it?

Kala gave a cry of dismay as sudden realization came to him.

"Juko has been in the night and dug it up again,"

he gulped. "He knew we would come here, so he sent the bridge crashing into the ravine to delay us. Now we shall never find the money, and you will be sold, O Bhang. I—I cannot bear it!"

At that moment Bhang pricked up his great ears. He had heard a slight rustle among the undergrowth some distance away.

The elephant dipped his trunk in a muddy pool at his side, lifted it, and—Swoosh!

From the raised trunk came a hissing jet of muddy water—smack into the middle of the bushes. There was the force of a mule's kick behind it.

A wailing scream came from them. Then a man, with muddy water streaming down his face and clutching a bulky sack, broke from the undergrowth.

It was Juko!

Bhang dipped his trunk again. This time the hissing jet of water took Juko in the middle of the back and flattened him on his face.

Kala and Sim pounced on him before he could rise.

A desperate struggle ensued. Juko was striving with all his might to shake off the jungle pals. Then suddenly he gave a cry and went limp.

Mystified, Kala relaxed his grip. And that was just what the rascally Juko had hoped for!

Now he came abruptly to life again. Snatching up the bulky sack, he tossed it into the swamp before Kala could stop him.

"There," Juko cried triumphantly. "I have put that where nobody will ever get it!"

And it looked as if he was right. The sack was just too far in for Kala to reach, and already it was being sucked under. He knew that by the time he could cut a stick to help him to get it, the sack would have sunk.

But Kala—and Juko—had reckoned without Bhang. Lumbering forward to the swamp edge, the elephant suddenly went down on his knees. Then out stretched his long, sensitive trunk. With a gasp of joy Kala saw it coil round the neck of the sack!

Seconds later it was lying at Kala's feet.

Snatching up the sack, Kala tore it open.

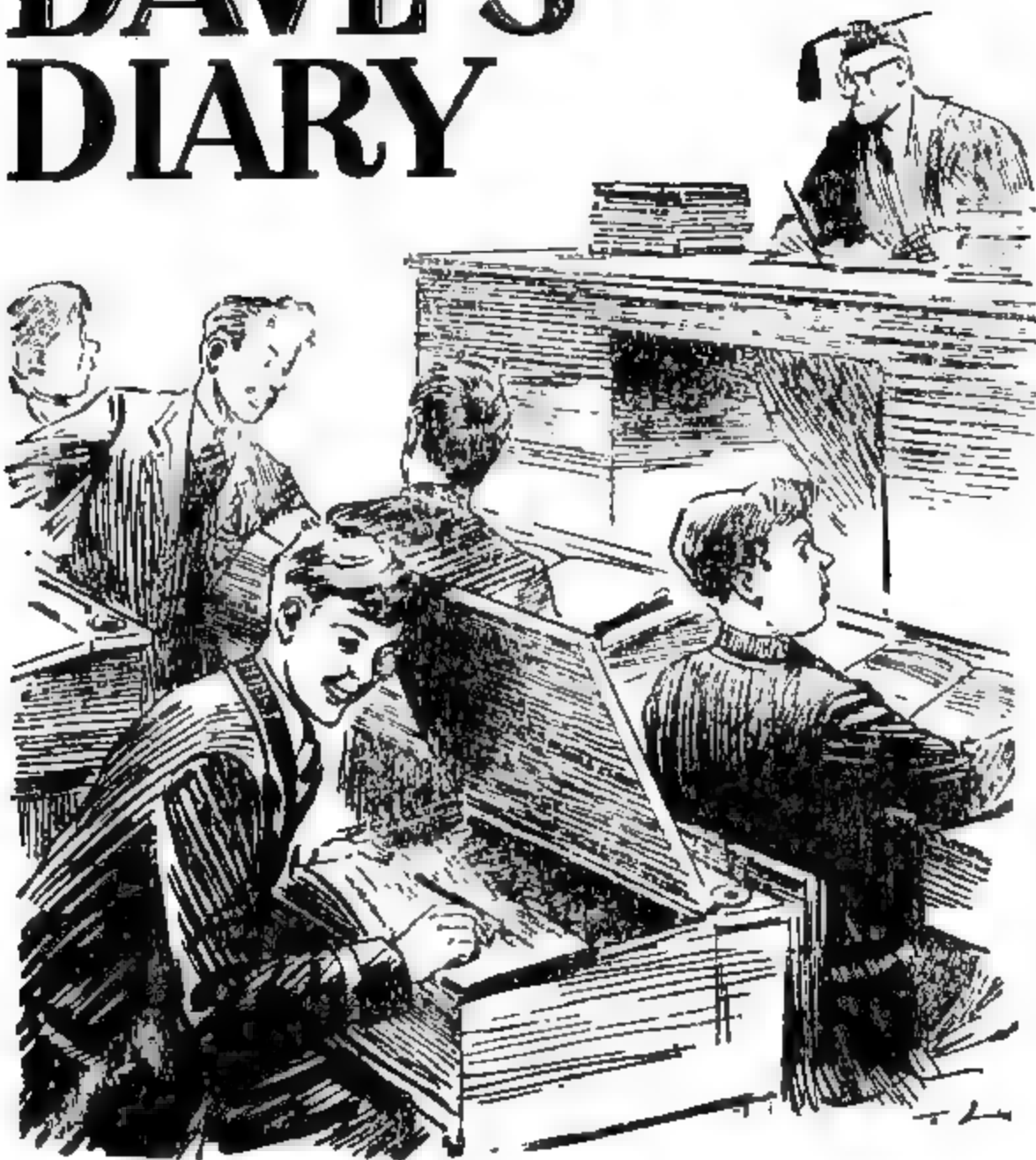
"It is here!" he cried, seeing the wads of paper money inside. "Now you will not have to be sold, Bhang. We shall stay together always."

Kala was right. Seeing that the game was up, Juko made a full confession to Mr. Brooks, and was locked up to await the arrival of the District Police.

And now that the money was recovered, there was no need for Mr. Brooks to sell up. In fact, he made Kala head of the elephant boys on the estate, and Kala never forgot that he had to thank Bhang and Sim quite a lot for his rise in the world.

THE END

DAVE'S DIARY



Monday

I'M not making myself out to be the kind of chap who goes out of his way to please school-masters and get himself patted on the head; but I like to do a good turn when I can, even to masters.

Come to think of it, the only pat from a master I've had for a long while was when Old Ginger, our maths master, looked at my homework and patted me on the side of the head so hard it knocked me sideways. If I hadn't caught hold of his desk, I might have gone flat on the floor. And was it my fault the desk came off its little platform and went "kerwallop" on the floor? You'd have thought so, the fuss he made!

But at the moment I'm not really thinking of masters (I seldom am except during the night when I'm asleep after eating cheese and sardines in bed).

I'm actually thinking of an old boy who lives near us, called the Skipper, when I talk of doing good turns. I did him one today—or meant to.

His real name is Captain Northstead, and he once commanded a ship. He has a little white beard and bright blue eyes that glitter, and walks with what's called a rolling gait. He hates boys, and any chap unlucky enough to chuck a ball by chance over the Skipper's fence only gets it back at risk of a wallop from his stick. (I think he deliberately lurks behind his fence when he hears us chaps coming home from school.)

Well, anyway, this afternoon, I did him a good turn—or meant to.

Revealed by TOM STIRLING

As I came cycling along with my pal, Wally Watts, I happened to notice there was a large dog scratching at the Skipper's garden gate, trying to get in.

"Hullo. The Skipper's got a dog," I said.

"Huh! That means trouble for us. He's got it to chase our chaps," said Lofty, a shrewd type.

But the dog was wagging its tail and it barked at me in a friendly eager way.

"You don't understand dogs," I told Wally. "He's friendly. He's asking to be let in. And if the Skipper has bought him to chase chaps out of his garden, it'd pay us to get in with the dog."

"There might be something in that," Wally admitted cautiously. "I'll bring back a bone to-morrow and strike up a friendship."

It seemed to me a lot easier to do something there and then to get on the right side of the dog. And letting it into its garden seemed like a good start.

"O.K., chap," I said to the dog. "I'm your pal, boy."

It wagged its tail cheerfully and looked up at me in an eager kind of "Open-the-gate-chum" way that was easy to understand.

"In you go," I said.

As I opened the gate I could see the Skipper digging in his garden, so Wally and I watched to see the glad reunion between him and his dog.

Gosh! Was I wrong!

That dog lowered its head, switched off its tail-wag mechanism, turned on a fierce growl and went straight for the Skipper as though it thought him its supper.

Gr.r.r.r. it went!

The Skipper whipped round, howled with dismay and swung the spade. But he lost his balance and the dog made a jump for him.

Wally and I watched spellbound. It was like a circus. The Skipper first kept the dog at bay with the spade; then he moved a little way towards the house.

Finally he turned tail and ran, with the dog taking running nips at him and, by the sound of it, scoring a point now and then.

Slam went the back door, and the dog stood there growling threateningly.

Wally nudged me and grinned.

"Dave!" he said. "I reckon you've boobed. Something tells me that isn't the Skipper's dog; and what's more he won't be grateful for your letting it in."

I didn't stop to argue it out. Hoping the Skipper

A Peep Into the Private Pages of a Schoolboy's Secret Record

hadn't recognised me, I ducked low, grabbed my bike, and bent well below fence level, made for home.

That's what happens when you do someone a good turn. I've been sitting at home here in my room doing homework and any moment expecting to hear a bang at the front door and then the Skipper's half-a-gale voice gusting through the house.

I've got a feeling there'll be trouble. Of course, I've got a perfectly good explanation. But, so far, I haven't found good explanations a lot of help really. One of the best I have *ever* had for being late got me not only a hundred lines, but detention as well for being "impertinent."

Something tells me I haven't heard the last of that dog business.

Tuesday

I MUST be a thought reader or something. I certainly guessed right about the dog incident. When I got downstairs to breakfast, the storm broke.

It so happened that Dad was late off. He was having a stand up breakfast with his overcoat on, and his umbrella under his arm, keeping one eye on the clock between mouthfuls.

"Late, Dad?" I said sympathetically; for I was a spot late myself.

"David!" he said thunderously slamming down his coffee cup. "I have had a serious complaint from Captain Northstead!"

"You have, Dad?" I said trying to sound astonished.

"Yes! You set a dog on to him, a ferocious dog," he said darkly.

"Eh?" I said taken aback. "Gosh! It's not true—"

He looked at his watch.

"I haven't time to deal with it now, David," he said. "But I have warned you enough about annoying Captain Northstead. If he can prove his case I'll deal with you severely... Mother! Where's my brief case?" he howled up the stairs.

I saw it on his chair and rushed to the door with it. My luck being out, he rushed in for it at the same moment, and we collided. My fault of course! Still, I gave him his brief case, and he hurtled for his train, without even saying thank you for my offer to lend him my bike.

Quite spoiled my appetite that mention of the Skipper, even though I had been half expecting it. For Dad had said he would take me to see our local team play the top of the table chaps on Saturday—if I'm good.

Seems that's one match I'll miss—if I can't explain away the Skipper's story.

Saw Wally on the way to school and told him.

"Just what I expected," he said smugly. "But I'm right behind you, Dave. I'll back you up all the way!"

"Never mind being right behind me, you can head the queue if the Skipper takes a rush at us," I said.

The Skipper wasn't at his gate when we passed on our way to school; and that was some relief. But I was a bit upset and I made one or two boops in algebra, and I also fluffed a bit in French, which isn't my strong subject (One day I'm going to find out which one *is*.) It takes very little to put me off my stroke at algebra though.

Going home at dinner-time, I saw the Skipper leaning over his gate.

"Wally," I said. "I'm going to take the bull by the horns."

"What! Explain to the Skipper?" he said aghast. "You must be daft."

It didn't seem to me to be daft. It was the right thing to do.

The Skipper's beard bristled and his eyes got smaller and brighter when he saw me. The storm signals were up!

I got off my bike and doffed my cap.

"Morning, Cap'n," I said politely.

"None of your cheek," he glowered. "You set your dog on me. Don't think I don't know who did it. I've reported you to your Pa and told him if he doesn't whack manners into you, I will."

"Matter of fact, sir," I explained, "it wasn't my dog. I thought it was yours. I'd never seen it before."

I saw his expression change slightly; his eyebrows twitched.

"Don't lie! There it is, following you. If you open my gate—if you set it on to me, I'll call the police—"

He pointed over my shoulder and I looked round startled. I could hardly believe it. There the same dog was trotting along. It had an amiable expression and was wagging its tail—until it saw the Skipper. Then its head went low; its ears went back and setting off at top speed, charged at the Skipper's gate and set up a fiendish barking and snarling.

The Skipper hopped back, raising his stick.

"Call it off!" he howled. "I'll report this to the police. Your dog's dangerous."

With that, he turned, and went striding off to his house.

"My dog? What makes him think it's mine?" I said to Wally.

The dog stopped snarling as it heard that, and turned to me wagging its tail. Then it sat up and begged—for a mouthful of sea-dog, I suppose.

But although it was a nice animal, I didn't want to seem to own it.

"You stay there!" I said sharply. "Come on, Wally."

It's an amazing thing, but that dog followed us, trotting along behind our bikes. And even though I put on a spurt, it still followed at a quick trot.

It followed me home, too. Of course I shut it out of the garden and hoped it would be gone when I set off for school again. But it wasn't.

"Scram!" I told it furiously, and then as it was so friendly I had a look at its collar. Perhaps there was a clue there. Its name was on it but no address. "Boodles" was all it said.

"Boodles . . . hop it!" I commanded.

But it still followed me . . . right up to the Skipper's house.

And gosh! The Skipper was standing at his gate, talking to a policeman!

"There's the dog—and the boy!" shouted the Skipper, pointing.

I rode like the wind, and managed to shake the dog off.



Boodles recognised me in a flash, and jumped on to my desk.

Shake it off, did I say? There was a scratching at the door during geography lesson, and when Mr. Slatcher opened the door that dog darted in, knocking him sideways, and jumped on my desk.

"Get your dog out of here!" raged Mr. Slatcher, the geography master.

Of course I said it wasn't my dog.

"Don't talk piffle to me. One hundred lines. Get it out of here!" he roared.

After that, I got Wally to hold the dog when school was over—it was still loitering outside, having torn a prefect's trousers I was told. Off I went at speed followed by Wally who had shut the

dog in the school lab . . . so he told me when he caught me up.

I half expected to find it at home waiting for me; but it wasn't.

Mum was, though.

"Dave, what's this about your having a dog?" she asked anxiously. "A policeman has been here saying it is supposed to be dangerous. I told him we haven't got a dog."

I told her just what had happened and while I was having tea she telephoned the Skipper. When she came back to me, she had a puzzled look.

"Are you sure you haven't adopted a dog, Dave?" she asked. "Captain Northstead insists you have! I won't have you keeping a dog secretly, especially a dangerous one."

I explained again. And I explained yet again to Dad when he came home.

"There's something I don't understand in all this, David," he said darkly. "The Captain says you set a dog on him; the policeman saw the same dog following you; and now a prefect has rung up wanting to charge me for damage he says your dog did to his trousers."

What could I do? Just repeat it all once more.

"There's only one thing to do, David," Dad said. "Tomorrow you'll go to Captain Northstead and apologise. Tell him what you told me; and I hope he believes you."

Gee—I hope so, too!

Wednesday

I TOLD Wally about the apology I had to make; and he said he'd come with me. Oddly enough, the dog hasn't shown up again.

Dinner time seemed the best chance of apologising, so we went to the Skipper's gate. As we got there, we saw him duck down out of sight.

I can't think why, but a sudden brainwave leapt into my head. Pretty obviously, he was listening—and I guessed he would expect me to say something that would give away that I did own the dog.

"Wally," I said to my pal's surprise. "You don't think the Skipper might come to my house after dark and find the dog shut up in the shed do you?"

Wally goggled.

"Eh?" he questioned.

I winked.

"That'd be the end," I said. "I'd better make sure it isn't in the shed before eleven o'clock. The Skipper will be in bed by then. No sign of him around now or I'd go and apologise."

I winked again, and without making the apology, rode off with Wally chasing me and asking for explanations.

"But the dog won't be in your shed," he said "What's the idea?"

"The Skipper was listening," I chuckled. "He's pretty sure it will be in the shed after eleven o'clock; and he'll want to prove it. So—he'll come to our shed secretly in the hope of finding it there."

"Well—and then?" asked Wally.

The trouble with Wally is that he has got absolutely no imagination. What a question to ask. Actually I haven't thought out all the details myself yet. Can't make up my mind what to have in the shed instead of the dog. Soot—or old oil from Dad's car, mixed with sawdust? I want it to be something worth the Skipper's trouble! Needs careful thought!

Thursday

WENT to Dad's bedroom door at shortly after eleven last night.

"Dad—there's a burglar about," I hissed urgently.

"What? Imagination!" he called scoffingly.

"Shush! Turn the light off, Dad, and listen," I persisted.

Dad came on to the landing, and we listened. There was definitely someone in the garden. We could hear the scrunch of cautious steps on the gravel.

Dad took a heavy stick and went down determinedly. I followed with interest. But, before he had unbolted the back door, we heard a shattering crash, some clanging and then wild yells.

"Gosh! He's in the shed, Dad!" I yelled.

The shed door was open, so I pulled it to and fixed the latch.

"Trapped! I'll dial nine-nine-nine!" said Dad. "Good work, Dave."

There was terrific banging on the shed door. A thunderous yelling, too.

"Let me out! Open this door!" came a voice.

"Captain Northstead," gasped Dad.

He opened the door and switched on his torch. The Skipper tottered out, his hands coated with oil, and sawdust and oil on his face.

"Captain Northstead! What are you doing in my shed?" demanded Dad. "I've been missing some garden tools . . . but I never suspected you!"

The Skipper was shaking with rage and pointed to me, spluttering and gibbering.

"He set me a booby trap!" he raged.

"What? Nonsense! How could he know you would come here?" said Dad. "I suggested a trap myself to catch the thief some weeks ago."

"I came to find the dog!" howled the Skipper.

"Dog! What dog? You've got dog on the brain," cut in Dad. "Don't try to fool me with that yarn. You tell it to the police. And here they come . . ."

he added as our gate was banged open.

But it was a dog that came . . . Boodles! And a man followed it in.

"So this is where Boodles comes," panted the man with the dog. And then he saw the Skipper.



Dad opened the door—and out tottered the man he thought was a burglar. How wrong he was!

"You're the rascal who stole my dog's ball!" he cried. "So that's it. He's tracked you to get his ball back. You were on the heath when I was throwing his ball. I saw you pick it up . . . I live ten miles from here—and the dog has been bolting from home day after day, looking for that ball."

The Skipper was thunderstruck. The ball had hit him on the head, he argued, and he thought a boy had thrown it, so he kept it. There was quite a fierce argument, with the dog growling all the time.

At last Dad interrupted.

"I want to get to bed. You'd better argue this out elsewhere," he said. "I advise you to give the dog back its ball, Captain."

The Skipper, after opening and shutting his mouth without saying anything, went off with the dog's owner. He was a very subdued little man, I thought.

"Well, well," said Dad with a chuckle. "Seems I misjudged you, Dave. Well, I'll make it up to you on Saturday when we go to the match . . . I'll stand you a slap-up tea afterwards. Sorry, son."

Then he looked in the shed, and saw the bath of oil. He smiled, turned to me and winked. He must have known it was a booby trap, specially set; but he didn't say a word. Jolly good sport, Dad!

THE END

GAME-WARDEN RON HUNTER

v. The Phantom



THE RED ARROW

By Rupert Drake

THE Red Arrow again!" frowned Ron Jameson. "So the antelope was killed by the same person who shot the zebra. And the giraffe! And the lion! But what does it all mean? I've got to find out."

Ron knelt beside the carcase of the antelope he'd just discovered dead on the wide South African veldt.

Ron was a young game warden on a Wild Animal Reserve, and right now he was on a lonely patrol. His job was to protect the wild life of the veldt—which was why he was looking so worried at the moment. The evening before he had come across a dead lion, half eaten by the scavenging vultures. There was a red arrow in its remains. And a red arrow had killed the giraffe that Ron had found earlier in the day!

Ron's frown deepened.

Who had killed the animals? And why?

"I've got to find the answers," he muttered.

"My reputation is at stake."

He peered at the arrow, examining it closely from

end to end. But there was nothing to tell him to whom it had belonged.

"It could mean something to Boko," he added, heaving himself to his feet. "I'll take it along for him to see."

Boko was his house-boy. He was an expert native tracker, and Ron looked on Boko more as a pal than as a servant.

Back at the bungalow, Ron laid the arrow on a table and clapped his hands for Boko.

"You called me, baas?" said the native lad. Then he caught sight of the red arrow. "Where you get that, baas?" he asked hoarsely.

Ron told him.

"Now you can do the talking," he added. "That arrow means something to you, doesn't it? O.K.! Spill it! Who did the arrow belong to?"

Boko pointed at the red feathers that formed the flight of the arrow. "This mean it belong to M'wembe, baas," he whispered.

When a "Spook" Leaves Footprints He's Asking for Trouble!

Ron did some rapid thinking. M'wembe's name was a legend among the natives. He was supposed to have been a mighty hunter who always made his kill with a red arrow. But, as far as Ron was concerned, that was only a legend.

"M'wembe died many moons ago," he pointed out. "You yourself, O Boko, said to me that the tale of M'wembe was spoken to you by your grandfather. Aye, and 'twas told to him by his father before that. Can a dead man slay an antelope?"

Boko shook his head. But he was far from being convinced.

"Maybe M'wembe's ghost him shoot the arrow," he suggested.

"Ghost! Rubbish!" retorted Ron sharply. "We're not even sure it was M'wembe's arrow. I mean anybody could dye an arrow red—"

"No, baas! That am M'wembe's arrow. See this, baas." Boko pointed to some notches on the long, straight shaft. "That am M'wembe's mark. My grandfather tell of him. No like it, baas. M'wembe mighty hunter long time ago. Now he is powerful spirit, and he still hunt the game on the veldt. Maybe him think baas steal his hunting grounds. Him very angry with baas."

"You mean it's a sort of warning?" frowned Ron.

"Yes, baas!" nodded Boko. "If baas stay here, plenty evil come his way. Better go now before evil strike."

For a moment Ron was silent. Then he shook his head.

"Forget it!" he said. "I've never quit yet, and I'm not starting now. I'm going to solve the mystery of the red arrow, if it's the last thing I ever do."

"Better you go, baas," declared Boko. "But, if you stay, I stay too."

Ron grinned.

"I knew you would! As a matter of fact, I was relying on you," he went on. "That antelope, you know, didn't drop dead at the waterhole where I found it. The arrow hadn't hit it in a fatal spot. Actually, the antelope had run a long way with the arrow in its side, before it finally dropped dead. If I knew where it had originally been shot, maybe I could pick up the tracks of the hunter. So our first job is to back-track the antelope. That's a job for you, Boko."

"Can do, baas!" nodded the native boy.

"That's great," grinned Ron. "O.K.! We'll make a start for the waterhole as soon as we've had something to eat."

An hour later Ron was retracing his steps, with Boko trudging at his side. The native boy was not feeling very happy, but he did not let a sign of his uneasiness show in his ebony face.

Presently they reached the waterhole, disturbing

the vultures that were already feeding on the remains of the antelope.

By now the sun was dipping towards the west, so Boko got busy at once. There was a jumble of tracks round the waterhole, for animals came to drink there from far and wide—but Boko's sharp eyes were able to pick out those of the antelope from the others.

Soon they were following the antelope's spoor across the veldt. Here and there were spots of blood to show that the animal was badly wounded. More than once it had fallen to its knees.

"We come close to place where him hit by arrow," said Boko, as they approached a range of hills. "Him run fast here."

The light was fading when Boko halted at last.

It was a gloomy spot. The rocky hillside was honeycombed with caves and ravines that looked dark and forbidding.

Boko could not help a shiver as he spoke.

"It happen here, baas," he whispered. "Yo' can see from the spoor that the antelope was trotting along quietly before him was hit by the arrow. Him stampeded and ran as far as the waterhole before him drop dead."

Ron nodded grimly.

"I guess that's how it was," he agreed. "And the arrow was in the animal's left side—therefore it must have come from one of those ravines. That middle one is just about in range, so we'll try there first."

Boko hung back. For a minute he listened. Not a sound disturbed the sinister silence; not a thing moved in the deepening dusk.

"Nobody there now, baas," whispered the native boy at last.

Ron spoke over his shoulder as he stepped towards the ravine.

"I'll believe that when I've had a look round," he said. "Come on!"

They had covered half the distance when suddenly Ron halted. He had heard a slight sound from the ravine—like a falling stone.

Somebody—or something—was there!

Before Ron could decide what was to be done next, a tall figure stepped from the darkness of the ravine.

Rod stared speechlessly.

Never had he seen such a figure. From head to foot it seemed to glow with a pale, spectral light. It was a native. He wore a towering head-dress of ostrich plumes and a leopard-skin cloak, and he had an immense bow, to which was fitted a gleaming, red arrow.

Boko let out a yell of dismay.

"It is the ghost of M'wembe the Hunter," he howled. "Flee, baas! We cannot fight with spirits!"

EVEN as Boko spoke, the spectral figure swung up the bow, pulling back the arrow until its feathered end touched his cheek.

Then—twang!

The arrow hissed in the air, looking like a fiery streak in the gloom.

"Look out, baas!"

Boko hurled himself at Ron.

He was only just in time. The arrow hissed by Ron's ear, missing him by a hairsbreadth as he went sprawling. It stuck quivering in a tree beyond.

Quick as thought, Ron heaved himself to his feet.

He expected another arrow to follow the first. But he had a shock when, glancing towards the ravine, he saw nobody there.

The Spectral Hunter had vanished!

Then, from the blackness of the gorge, he heard sounds, as of pounding, slithering feet.

A tight laugh broke from his lips.

"Of course!" Ron ground out. "He bolted down the ravine. That noise proves it wasn't a ghost. But I'm not going to be fooled this time. Come on Boko!"

Ron raced towards the ravine, with his black pal close at his heels. Without a moment's hesitation they plunged into it, their running footfalls echoing thunderously as they ran.

Suddenly Ron halted.

"Half a mo'!" he frowned. "There's something wrong. That sound is coming *towards* us, and it isn't caused by a running man—or a ghost, either. It's something a heap bigger. And—shucks!"

His words trailed away in a gasp of amazement. Something huge had just come lumbering round a bend in the ravine, some fifty yards ahead.

There was just light enough to recognise it as a charging rhino!

Boko stared with goggling eyes. To him it looked as if the spectral hunter had changed himself into a rhino. It was the last straw. He was ready to face a charging rhino, though he well knew that a rhinoceros was quite the most dangerous brute on the veldt. But a rhino that, a minute ago, had been a spectral hunter, was another matter!

With a shout to Ron, Boko turned and ran, intending to climb out of reach up the sheer side of the ravine.

But he didn't quite make it.

A stone turned under his foot, and he went sprawling, hitting the ground with a heavy thud.

Half stunned, he did not move for several seconds. And then an agonising pain in his knee prevented him from rising to his feet.

It looked as if he was doomed.

The rhino thought so too, and gave a snort of triumph. Even Ron felt a chill wave of despair sweep over him. But he threw it off immediately.

He was determined that his pal should not be trampled to death under the rhino's huge feet.

There was little time to do anything, though.

He never carried a rifle, and he knew that the revolver in his belt was useless against the rhino's tough hide.

It was right on him now.

Swoosh! Its huge curved horn slashed at him. Nimbly Ron leapt aside. The slashing horn missed him by inches. But he was far from being out of trouble. Like a charging tank the tremendous fore-quarters of the brute loomed up in front of him, and he jumped again. And again! The last time was up into the air.

It was a terrific leap, and he landed astride the rhino's back!

The rhino uttered a roar of rage.

Never before had it had a passenger, and it did all in its power to get rid of the unwelcome human on its back.

But Ron stuck like a burr, gripping with his knees and fastening both hands on the rhino's horn.

The rhino charged on—and right in its path was the helpless Boko!

Another three paces, and the life would be crushed out of Ron's pal!

"It isn't going to happen," gritted Ron.

But how could he prevent it? Desperately he wrenched at the rhino's horn, putting all his strength into one fierce tug. The brute's head was twisted round, and it swerved involuntarily, scraping past Boko without actually treading on him.

Ron glanced downwards. He could have cheered to see that his black pal was unhurt. He had only himself to think about now. But that was plenty. The rhino's frantic bucking was having its effect, and he was on the point of being thrown off.

Then the problem was settled for him. Right ahead, a twisted tree grew out from the side of the cliff. Ron realized that nothing he could do would prevent them from passing beneath it. The spreading branches would sweep him from the rhino's back, unless—

A sudden plan flashed to his mind.

Next moment he'd tucked up his knees and used his feet to catapult himself into the air, with arms outstretched. His fingers hooked over a stout branch and tightened automatically. An instant later he was dangling from the branch while the galloping rhino, free of its passenger, went charging into the gloom.

It had disappeared when Ron dropped lightly to the ground and ran back to where Boko was struggling to his feet.

There was no time for words.

Taking Boko's arm, he helped him across the ravine, to where there was a ledge twelve feet or so from its floor.

"We'll be safe here," he panted, breathless from the climb with Boko clinging to his back. "That rhino won't get us now, so you can rest without worrying."

Boko did worry, though. Quite a lot!

"That no ordinary rhino, baas," he said. "Him M'wembe the Hunter. Better we go back home and forget 'bout him, baas."

Ron shook his head.

"Not on your life!" he declared. "Get out of your brain-pan that M'wembe and the rhino are one and the same. They aren't—and I'll prove it as soon as you've had a rest."

More than that Ron would not say—until, ten minutes later, they slid down from the ledge.

By that time Boko was fully recovered, and for most of the ten minutes they hadn't heard a thing of the rampaging rhino.

Ron led the way to the tree and pointed to its overhanging branches.

"Have a look up there," he said. "What do you make of it?"

Boko examined the tree.

"Him fellow jump and catch tree, baas," he said.

"Like I did!" nodded Ron. "But it wasn't yours truly who made those marks. I saw them when I climbed up on the bough. Somebody else shinned up the tree before me, and that somebody was—"

"M'wembe, baas!" breathed Boko. "Him no changed into the rhino. Him escape that way. Maybe him savvy the rhino am there and him lure us into a trap."

Ron nodded.

"I guess that's it. He wangled the rhino on to his side, and thought he'd pulled a fast one on us. But, before we're through with him, he's going to find out he made a mistake.

"He'll be miles away by now," went on Ron thoughtfully. "But he'll have left a spoor for you to follow. So—get busy, Boko—before it's too dark even for you! We're going to even up things with M'wembe's ghost. And we're going to find out who the 'ghost' is—and what he's up to, as well. Up you go, Boko."

THE SPECTRE AT BAY

BOKO did not need to be told twice.

Straddling the bough, he worked his way to the ledge from which the tree grew. Despite the deepening darkness, more faint tracks showed there.

Other marks showed where M'wembe had climbed from the ravine.

That was enough for Boko.

Swiftly he swung himself up the cliff—with Ron only a yard below him.

Reaching the top, he sped along the trail M'wembe

had left. It was now almost dark. But that did not worry Boko a lot, for he had trained himself to see like a cat in the dark. Besides, M'wembe, in his haste to escape, had made no attempt to obliterate his tracks.

Soon, though, it wasn't so easy.

The trail led to a mountain torrent. M'wembe had waded into the frothing water—and that, as far as Ron was concerned, was the end of the trail.

Search as he might, he could not discover where the "ghost" had come out on the other bank.

"Now we know why he didn't bother about the tracks he left," frowned Ron. "He knew the trail was going to end here, and the rest just didn't matter. He was right there. There's no way of telling whether he went up or down stream. So we'll just have to keep on hunting around till we find where he waded ashore. And that means more lost time."

Boko said nothing. Knee-deep in the torrent, he was questing around some rocks up the stream.

Suddenly he straightened up.

"Him go upstream, baas," he said.

"How do you know?"

"Boko find dis, baas," was the reply.

He held up a red-dyed feather for Ron to see.

"Him come from M'wembe's arrow," the native boy went on. "Boko find him caught up on rock. The current carry it downstream. So M'wembe drop it higher up."

"Gosh! You're right!" exclaimed Ron. "Let me look!"

He took the feather and examined it closely. There was no doubt it had come from the ghostly hunter's arrow. Even in the gloom Ron could see that it was dyed the same red as the arrow he'd found in the dead antelope.

Silently he passed it back to his black pal. Then he pointed upstream.

"O.K., Boko!" he said. "You take the right bank. I'll take the other. Sing out if you find where he left the water. Carry on!"

Ron's plan was put into effect at once. But, with the light growing worse every moment, progress was naturally slow.

They had hardly gone a couple of hundred yards when Ron was suddenly aware of a sound like distant thunder.

"What's that?" he demanded.

"Him big waterfall, baas."

Some minutes later they came in sight of the fall.

The moon was rising above the tree-tops, and in its wan light they saw a huge cliff barring their way. Over it the torrent leapt to a rocky pool in a thousand-foot fall.

Ron eyed the sheer cliff with satisfaction.

"M'wembe can't have climbed up there," he said. "And we know he didn't leave the torrent

anywhere. So it looks as if we've got him cornered. And a cornered rat is dangerous. We'll need to watch our step, Boko."

Boko nodded as he silently surveyed the fall. Ron was right. No human being could scale that sheer precipice.

But—was M'wembe human?

At the back of his mind Boko still had the feeling that he might not be! Then a shout was torn from Boko's lips.

"Baas! Look!"

He pointed to a ledge a hundred feet or so up the cliff. A glowing figure stood just to the left of the falling waters. It was M'wembe the Hunter. He had an arrow fitted to his great bow, and he was taking aim at them.

It was all Boko needed to convince him that they were dealing with a ghost!

Ron whipped out his revolver. There was no time for a steady shot—and, anyway, his only intention was to spoil M'wembe's aim. He was successful there. The bullet smacked into the rock above the hunter's head, bringing down a shower of stones upon him, just as he let fly with the arrow.

The arrow hit the ground a yard wide of the pals, while M'wembe, in his haste to get out of the way, let go of the bow.

Ron darted in to snatch it up as it fell to the rocks, a few paces away.

"He won't use that again," shouted Ron triumphantly. "He—he—. Oh, gosh! He's disappeared again!"

It was true. No longer was there a sign of the spectral hunter on the ledge, though the moon was brighter than ever!

He had apparently vanished into thin air!

"Him ghost, all-a-right, baas!" wailed Boko.

"Ghost be hanged!" cried Ron, thinking fast. "We can't see him because he dodged behind the waterfall. All right, Boko! We're going up there to fix him."

But that was easier said than done. The cliff was as smooth as glass, and a quick search failed to show how M'wembe had reached the ledge. Ron was not to be beaten, though, and he was in no mood to waste time. From a near-by tree he hacked a liana and made one end fast to the arrow M'wembe had fired at them—fitted the arrow to the bow and bent the latter with all his might.

Then—twang!

The arrow curved into the air, burying itself deep in a crevice just above the ledge.

The liana trailed down like a rope, almost reaching the ground.

Ron swarmed nimbly up it. Boko watched breathlessly, half expecting to see the daring young warden come crashing to the ground.

But nothing of the sort happened. Ron dragged himself on to the ledge. A moment later he was gripping the rope and calling to Boko to come up.

"There's a cave behind the waterfall," he said, when his black pal joined him.

Ron led the way. It was pitch dark in the cave behind the waterfall, but Ron was equipped with an electric torch, which he flashed on at rare intervals.

It showed M'wembe's footprints on the floor and led them to a rocky chamber where a fire burned.

"M'wembe's lair!" muttered Ron.

His torch swept round the cavern. It was empty. Or was it? Suddenly there was a heavy thud and a startled cry from Boko. Ron whirled. He gasped at what he saw.

His black pal was sagging at the knees, felled by a cowardly blow from behind. And a spectral figure, that had been flattened to the wall beside the cavern entrance, was charging at him with raised spear.

It was M'wembe's ghost!

Ron went into action. With one hand he caught the descending spear and wrenched it from M'wembe's grasp. The other whipped across to the man's jaw, and—wham!

M'wembe staggered as the fist slammed into his chin.

Ron followed it up with a whizzing uppercut—that lifted M'wembe off his feet and dropped him in a huddled heap in a corner.

Even as M'wembe sat up, his own spear, now held by a determined Ron, prodded him in the chest.

"Stay put!" snapped Ron. "It's lucky for you Boko has a hard head and isn't badly hurt. Otherwise, I should be showing you how tough I can be. All the same, I shouldn't try anything."

Ron shone his torch into the other's face.

"So that's how it is!" he gritted. "Of course, I guessed all along you were an impostor. But I really knew when Boko picked up that feather from your arrow out of the water. You see, there was a smear of luminous paint on it.

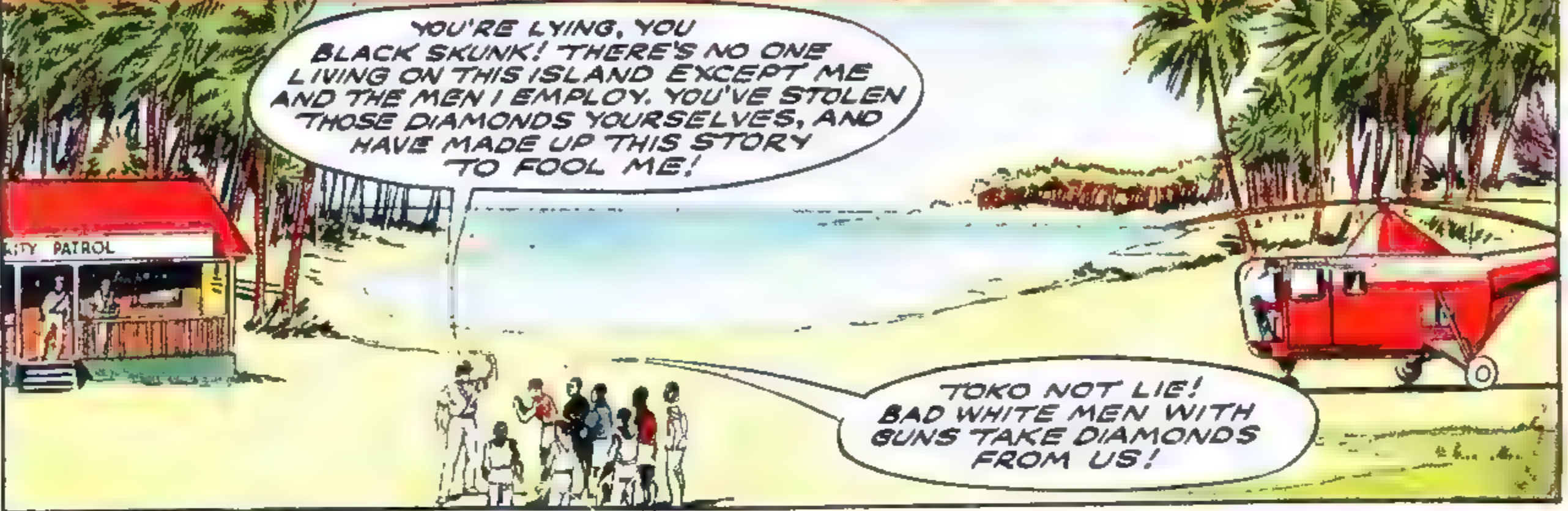
"But I couldn't figure out what your game was," went on Ron. "Well, I know now! You're Janwi, the foreman I sacked for cruelty. You meant to get your own back, didn't you? You intended to get me dismissed for incompetence . . . Well, it didn't work out the way you meant. I'm handing you over to the police, and they'll see you get your deserts."

Ron Jameson had proved himself more than a match for the Phantom Hunter!

DIAMOND RAIDERS of CORAL ISLE

BY ROY LEIGHTON

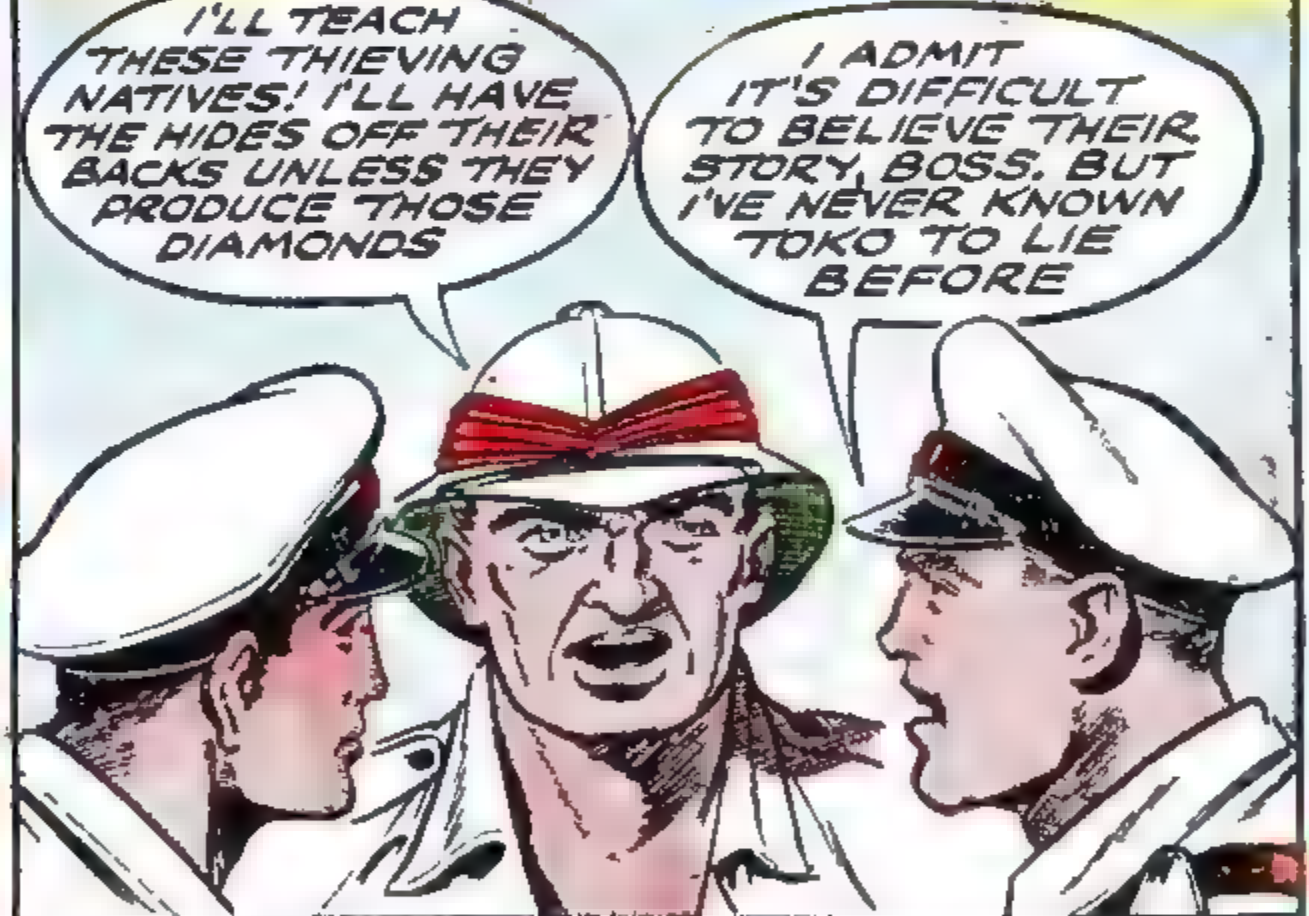
JED GARFIELD WAS BOSS OF A COMPANY WHICH OWNED A SMALL CORAL ISLAND IN THE SOUTH SEAS. THERE HE EMPLOYED NATIVES TO DIG OUT DIAMONDS FROM PITS. ONE DAY, AN ISLANDER NAMED TOKO HURRIED TO GARFIELD'S SHACK TO SAY THAT HE AND HIS WORKMATES HAD BEEN ATTACKED AND ROBBED.



GARFIELD JERKED A THUMB IN THE DIRECTION OF HIS SECURITY OFFICERS, HARRY GORDON AND COLIN WHITE.



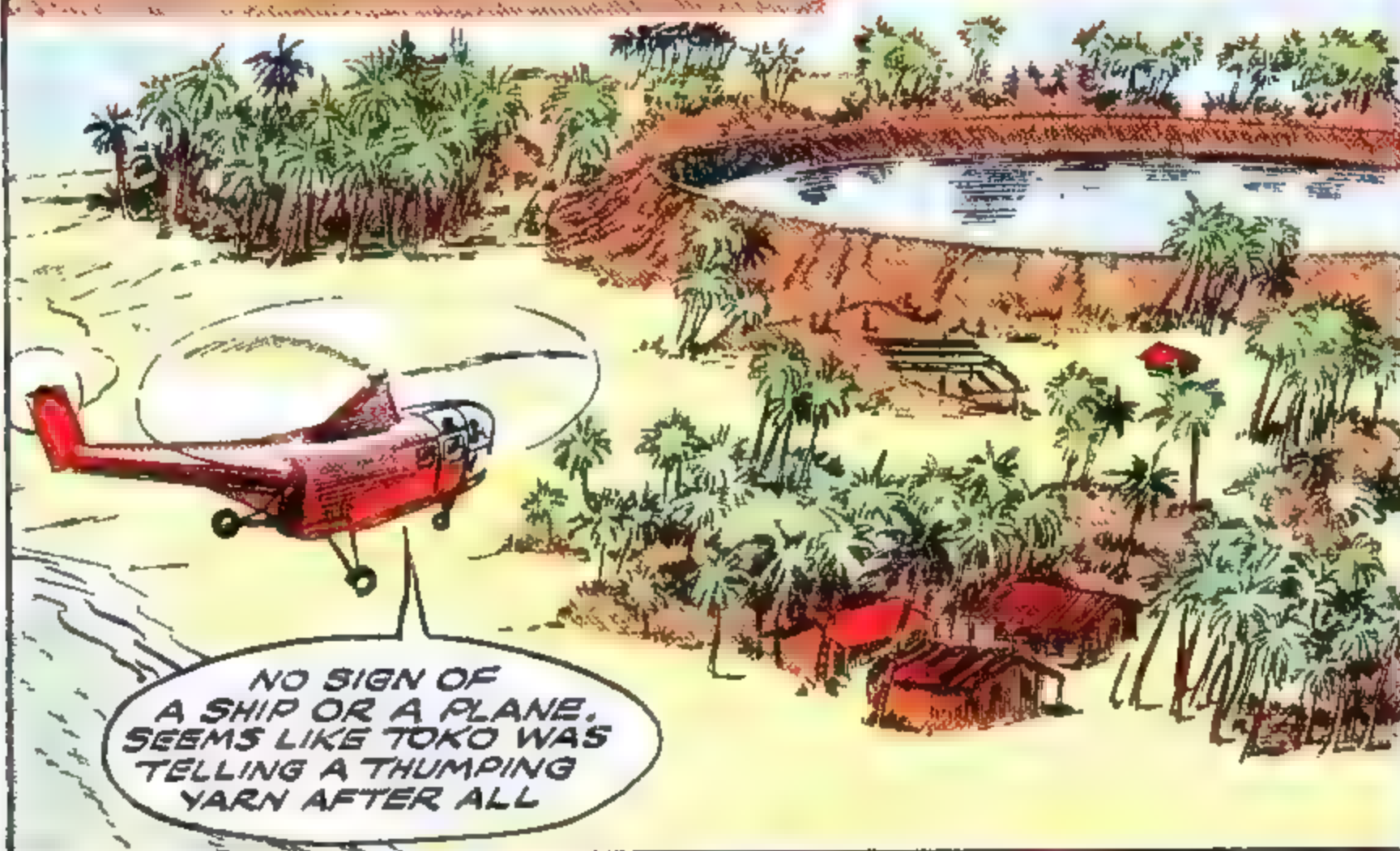
GARFIELD SNORTED AS HE TURNED TO HARRY



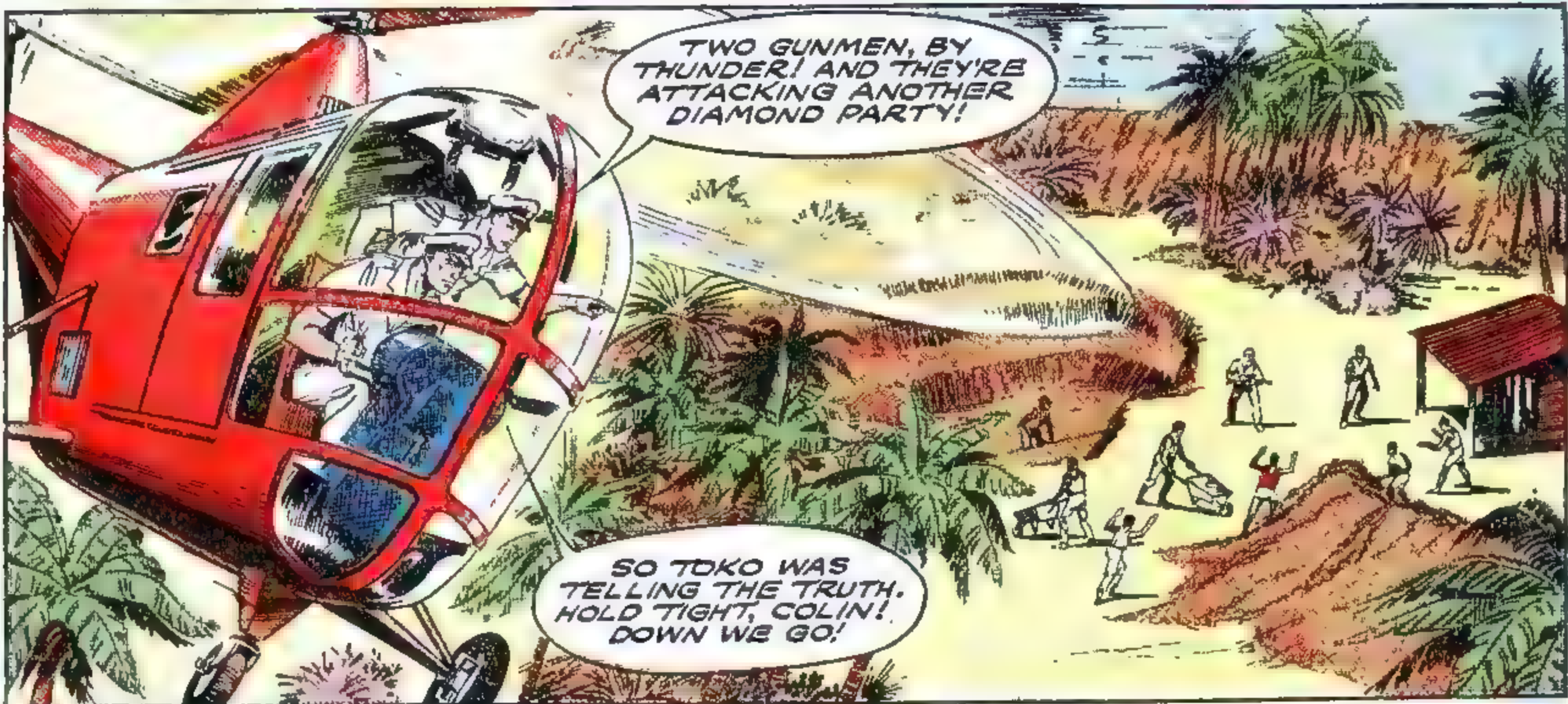
HARRY AND COLIN MADE FOR THEIR HELICOPTER, TO SET OFF ON THEIR NEXT PATROL



THE HELICOPTER ROSE INTO THE AIR AND BEGAN ITS PATROL OF THE CORAL ISLE



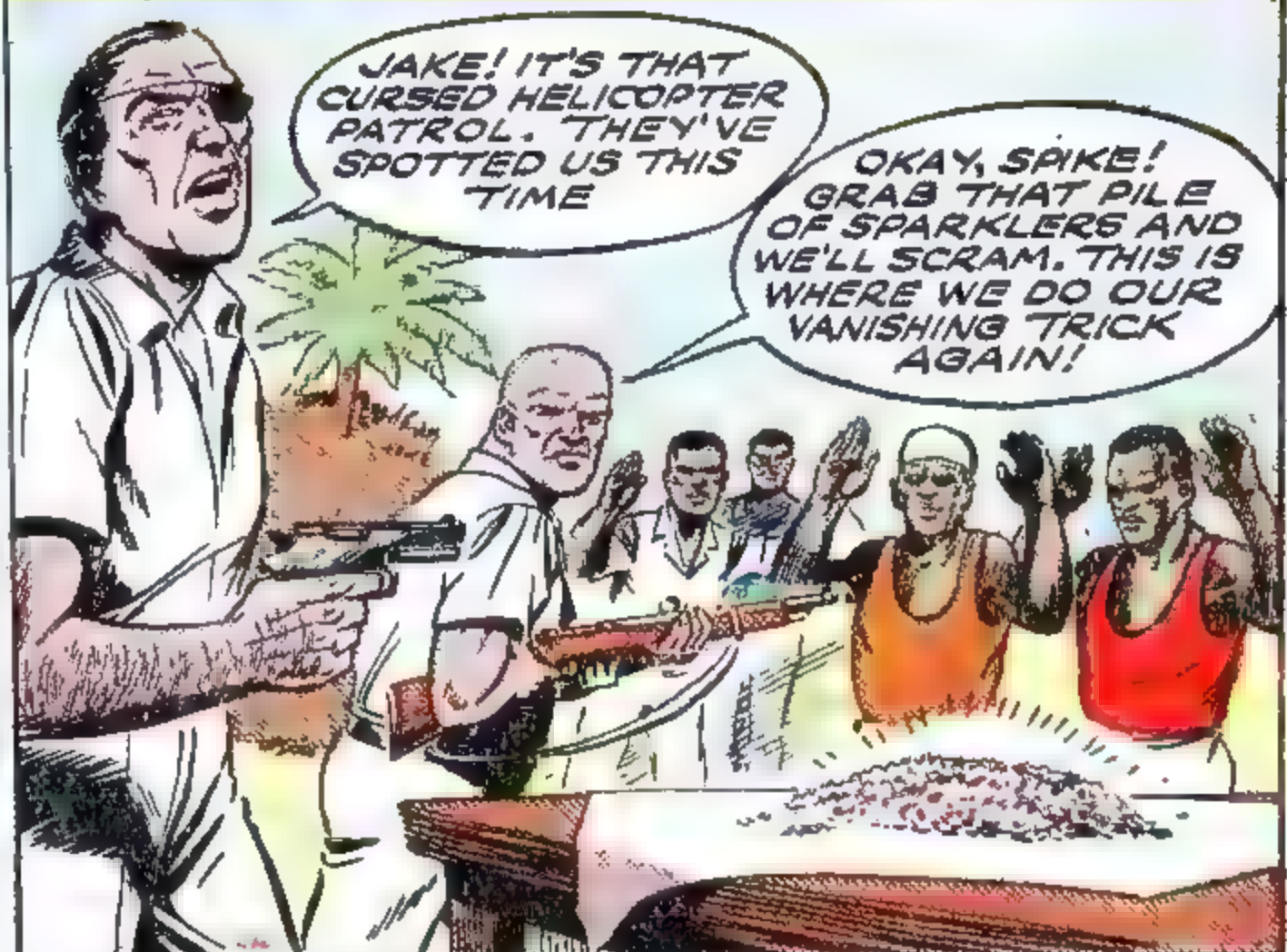
BUT, AS THEY NEARED THE CENTRE OF THE ISLAND, COLIN GAVE A GASP

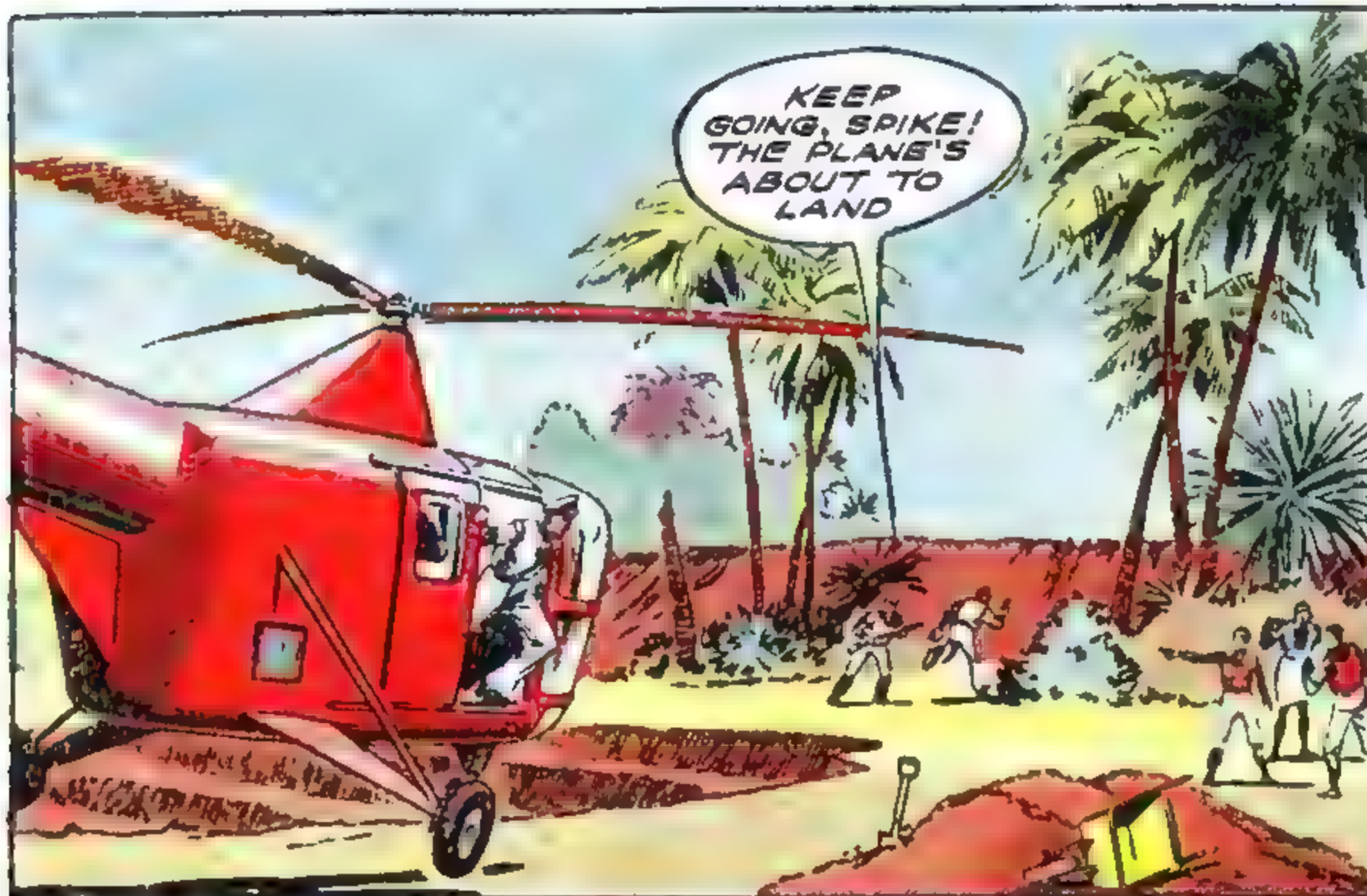


THE HELICOPTER DIVED AT BREATHLESS SPEED



THE ROAR OF THE SWOOPING PLANE, HOWEVER, GAVE WARNING TO THE CROOKS





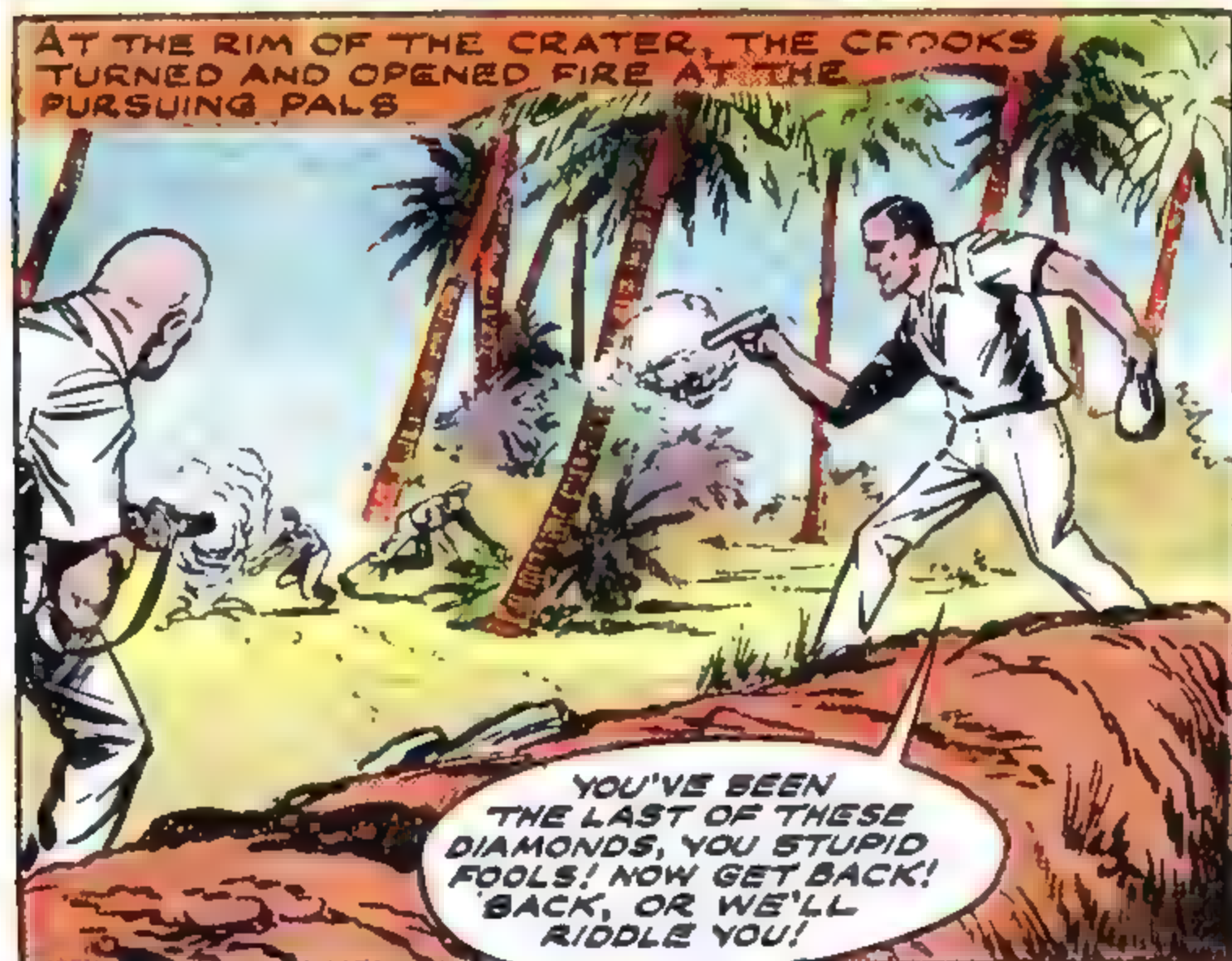
KEEP GOING, SPIKE!
THE PLANE'S ABOUT TO LAND



GRIMLY HARRY AND COLIN
LEAPT DOWN

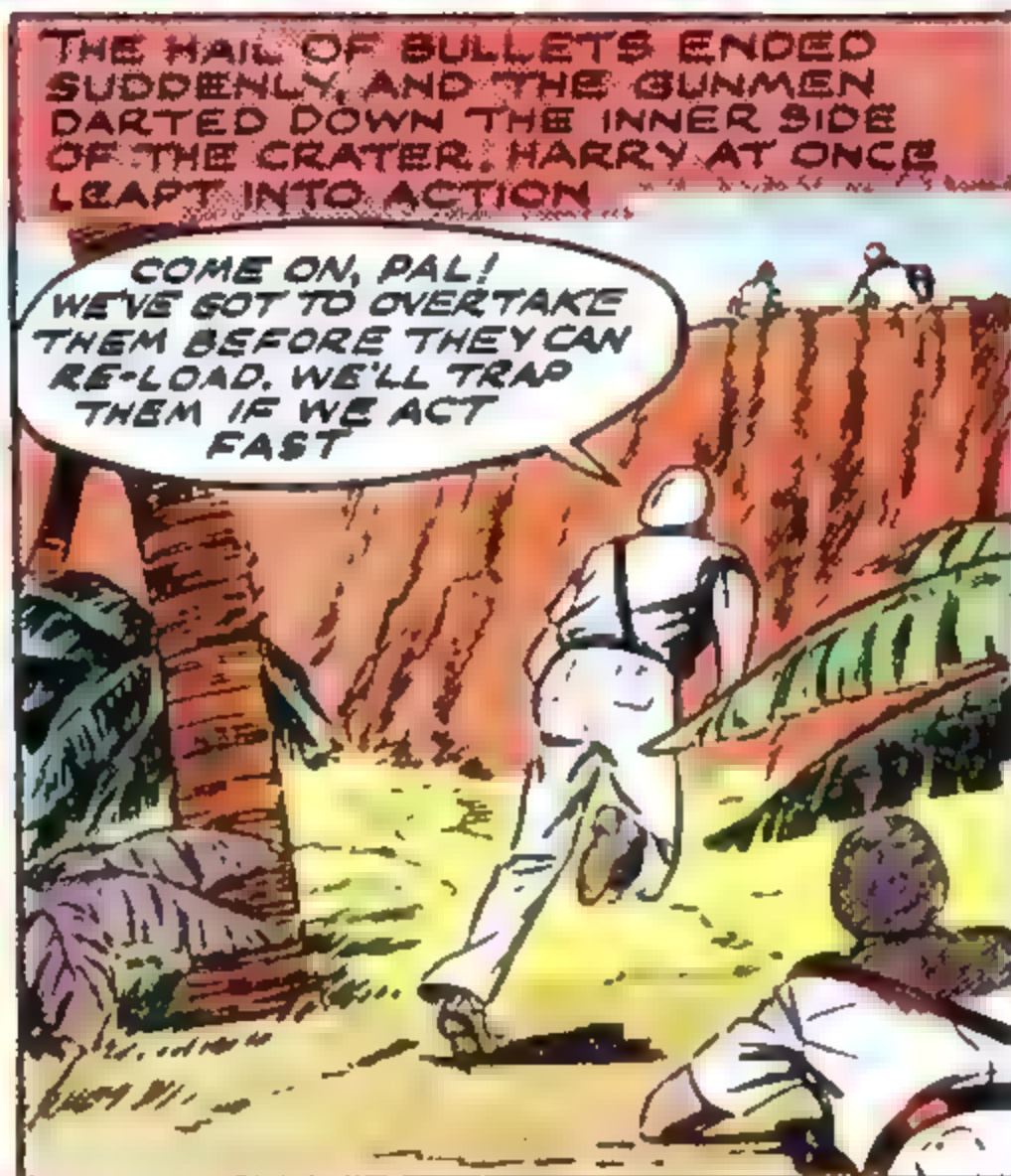
AFTER THEM!
THEY CAN'T GET FAR

WATCH
OUT FOR THEIR
GUNS. THEY'RE
ARMED - AND
WE'RE NOT!



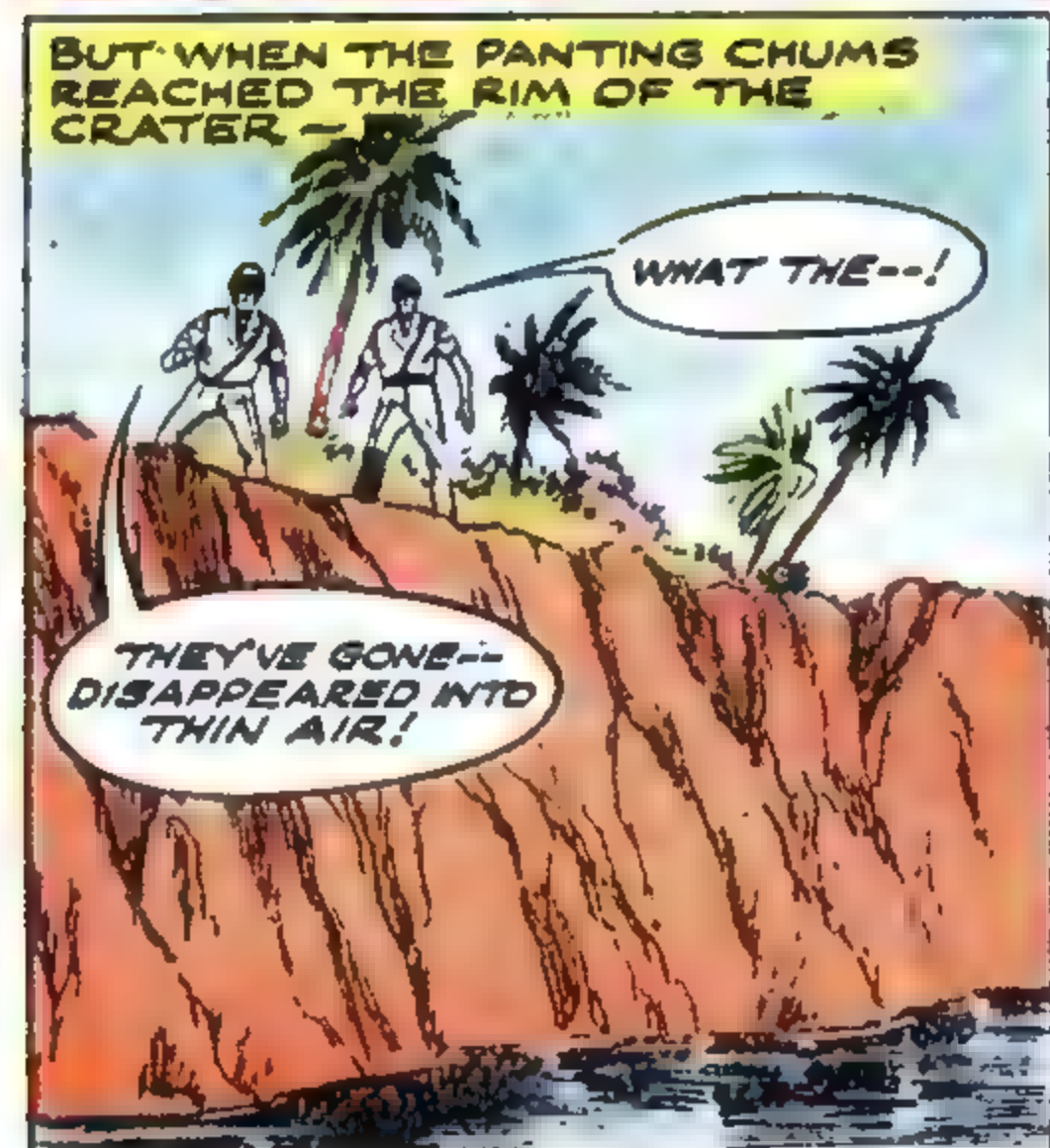
AT THE RIM OF THE CRATER, THE CROOKS
TURNED AND OPENED FIRE AT THE
PURSUING PALS

YOU'VE BEEN
THE LAST OF THESE
DIAMONDS, YOU STUPID
FOOLS! NOW GET BACK!
BACK, OR WE'LL
RIDDLE YOU!



THE HAIL OF BULLETS ENDED
SUDDENLY, AND THE GUNMEN
DARTED DOWN THE INNER SIDE
OF THE CRATER. HARRY AT ONCE
LEAPT INTO ACTION

COME ON, PAL!
WE'VE GOT TO OVERTAKE
THEM BEFORE THEY CAN
RE-LOAD. WE'LL TRAP
THEM IF WE ACT
FAST



BUT WHEN THE PANTING CHUMS
REACHED THE RIM OF THE
CRATER -

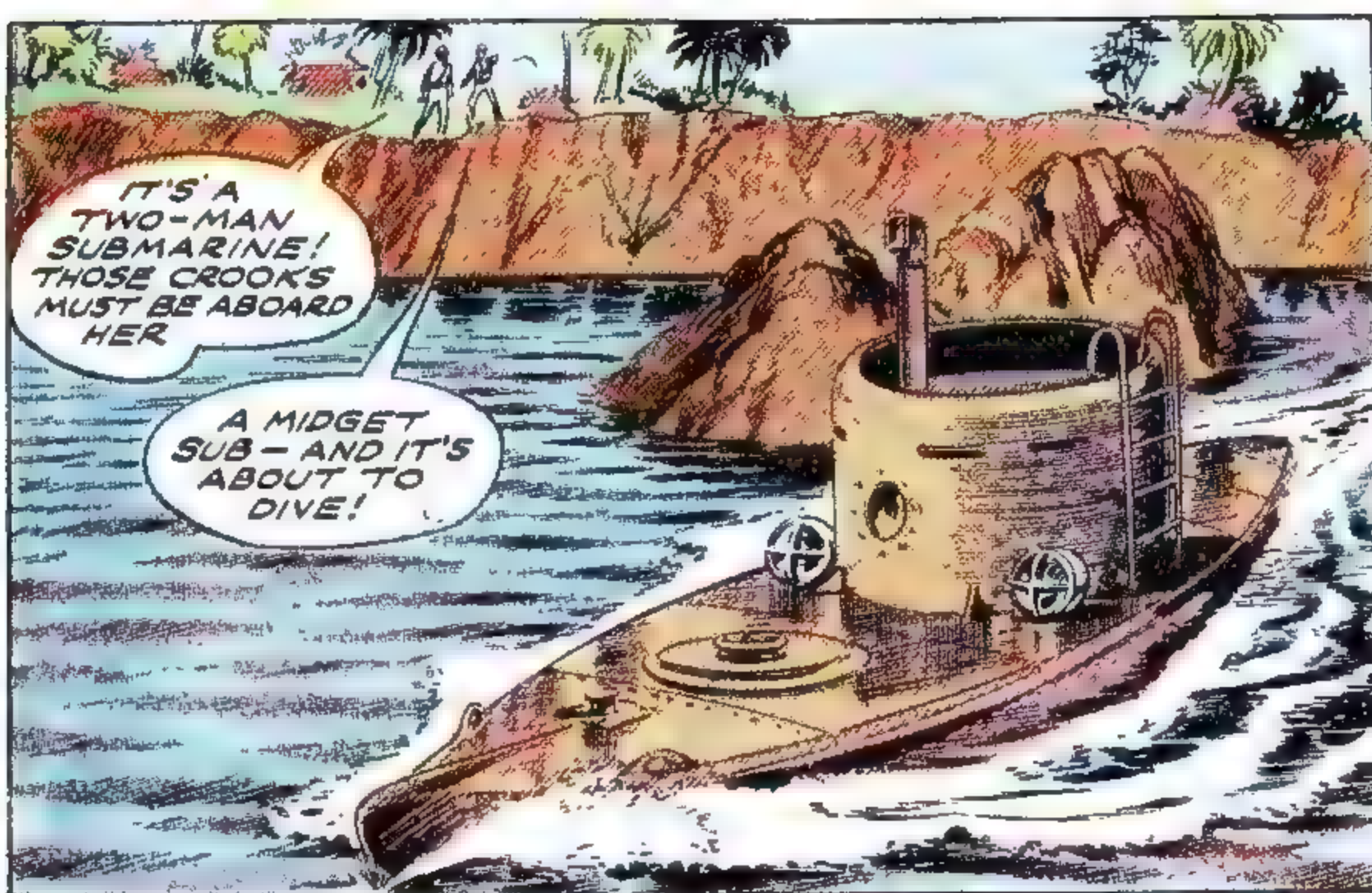
WHAT THE--!

THEY'VE GONE--
DISAPPEARED INTO
THIN AIR!



THE NEXT MOMENT--

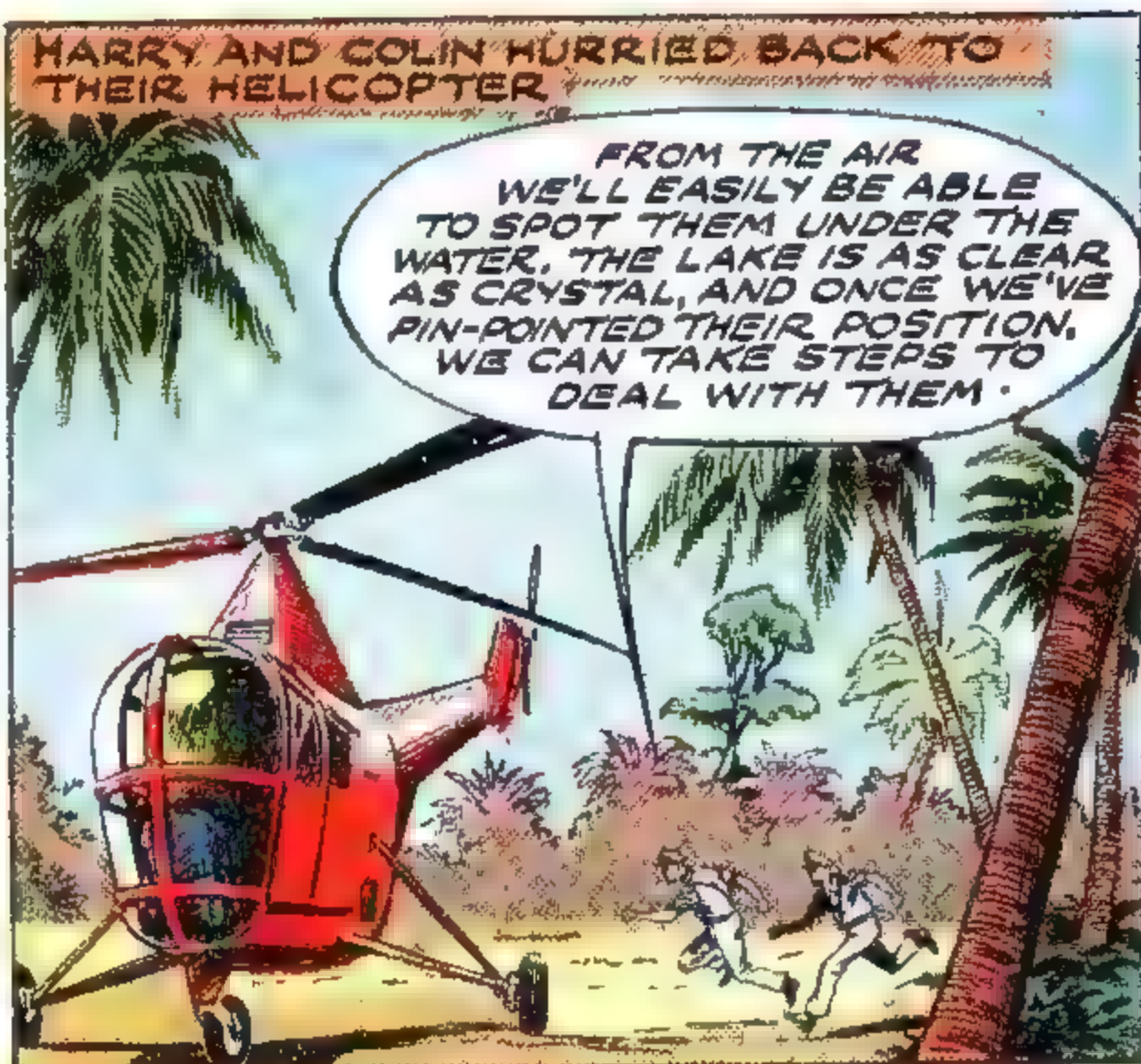
GREAT
SEA-SERPENTS! LOOK
THERE! ON THE
SURFACE OF THE
LAKE!



IT'S A TWO-MAN SUBMARINE! THOSE CROOKS MUST BE ABOARD HER

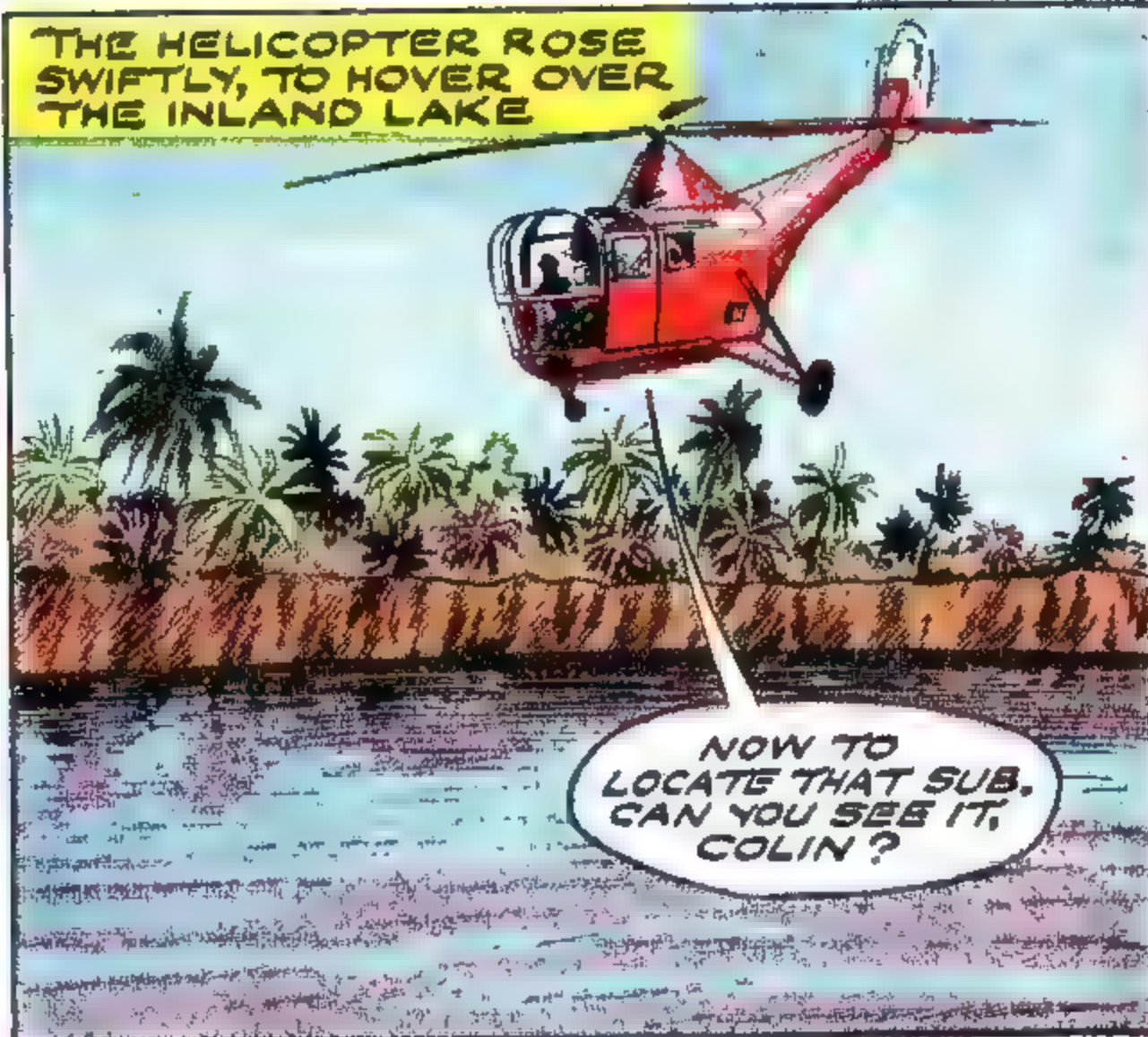
A MIDGET SUB—AND IT'S ABOUT TO DIVE!

SO THAT'S THEIR GAME! THEY HOPE TO LIE DOGGY, AND THEN COME TO THE SURFACE AND STRIKE AGAIN WHEN THEY THINK THE COAST IS CLEAR! WELL, WE'LL SOON SCUPPER THAT LITTLE TRICK



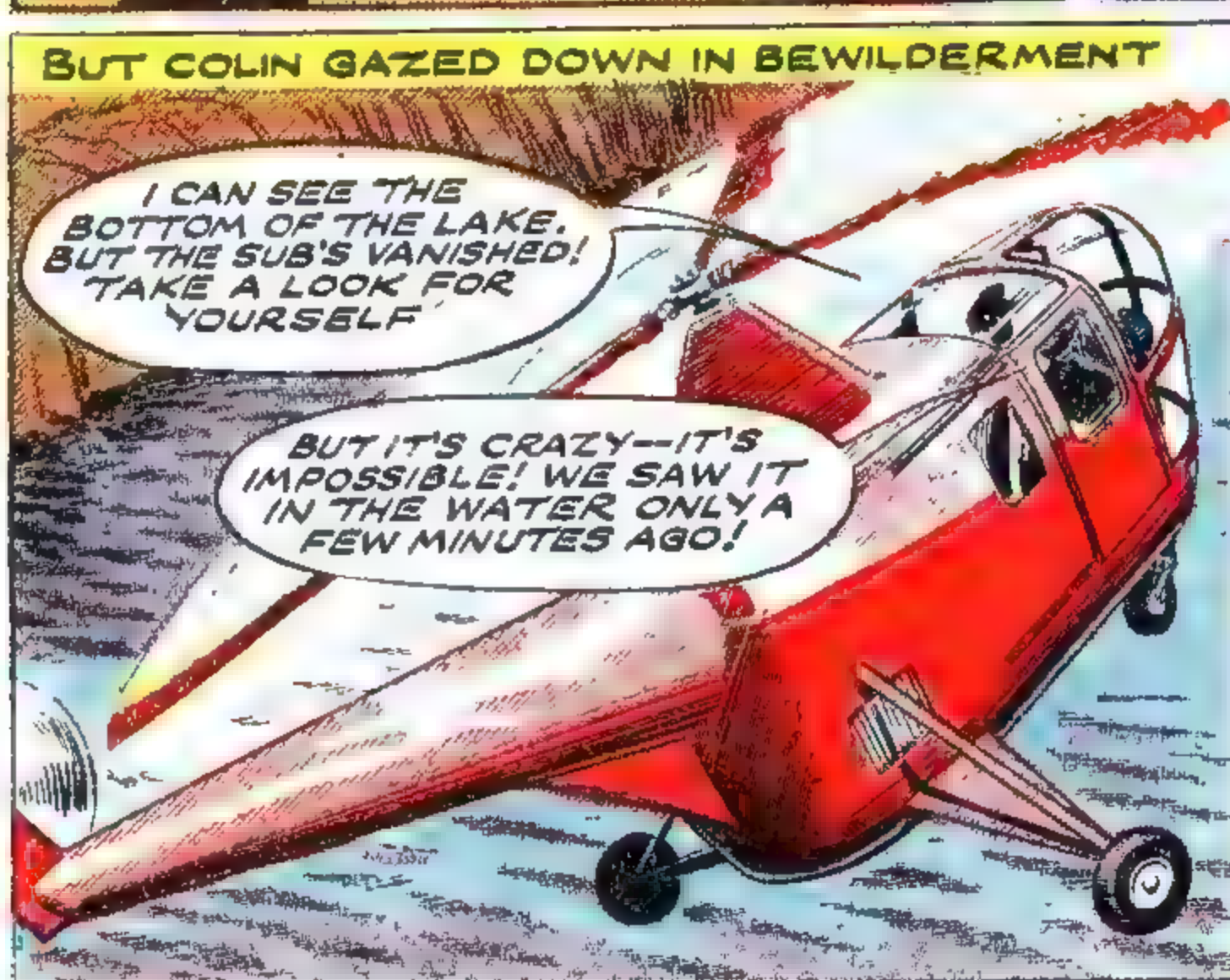
HARRY AND COLIN HURRIED BACK TO THEIR HELICOPTER

FROM THE AIR WE'LL EASILY BE ABLE TO SPOT THEM UNDER THE WATER. THE LAKE IS AS CLEAR AS CRYSTAL, AND ONCE WE'VE PIN-POINTED THEIR POSITION, WE CAN TAKE STEPS TO DEAL WITH THEM.



THE HELICOPTER ROSE SWIFTLY, TO HOVER OVER THE INLAND LAKE

NOW TO LOCATE THAT SUB. CAN YOU SEE IT, COLIN?



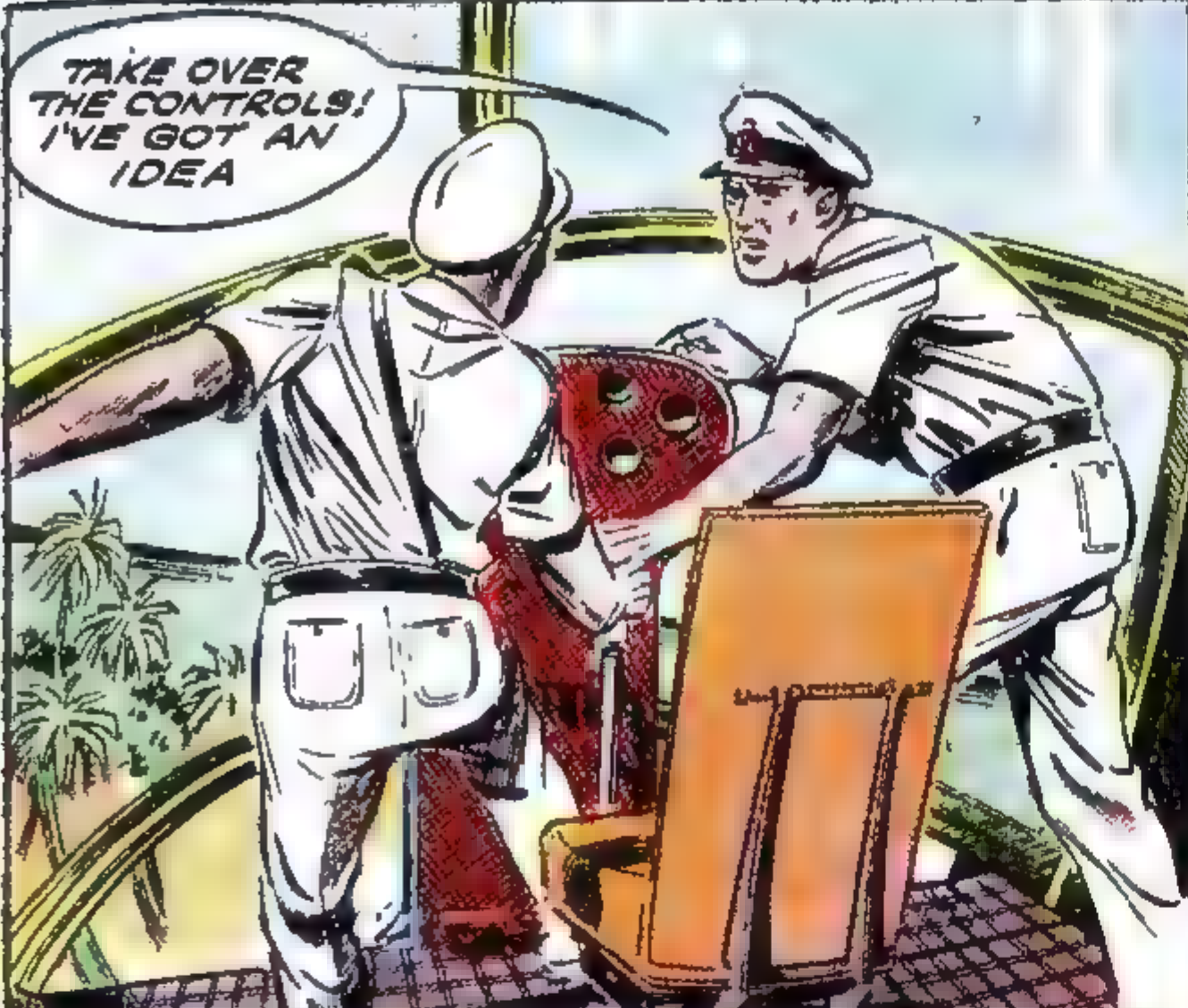
BUT COLIN GAZED DOWN IN BEWILDERMENT

I CAN SEE THE BOTTOM OF THE LAKE, BUT THE SUB'S VANISHED! TAKE A LOOK FOR YOURSELF

BUT IT'S CRAZY--IT'S IMPOSSIBLE! WE SAW IT IN THE WATER ONLY A FEW MINUTES AGO!



THIS IS THE BIGGEST MYSTERY EVER, BUT WE'RE GOING TO SOLVE IT, CHUM, AND COLLAR THOSE DIAMOND RAIDERS--EVEN IF IT MEANS WORKING NIGHT AND DAY FOR A MONTH!

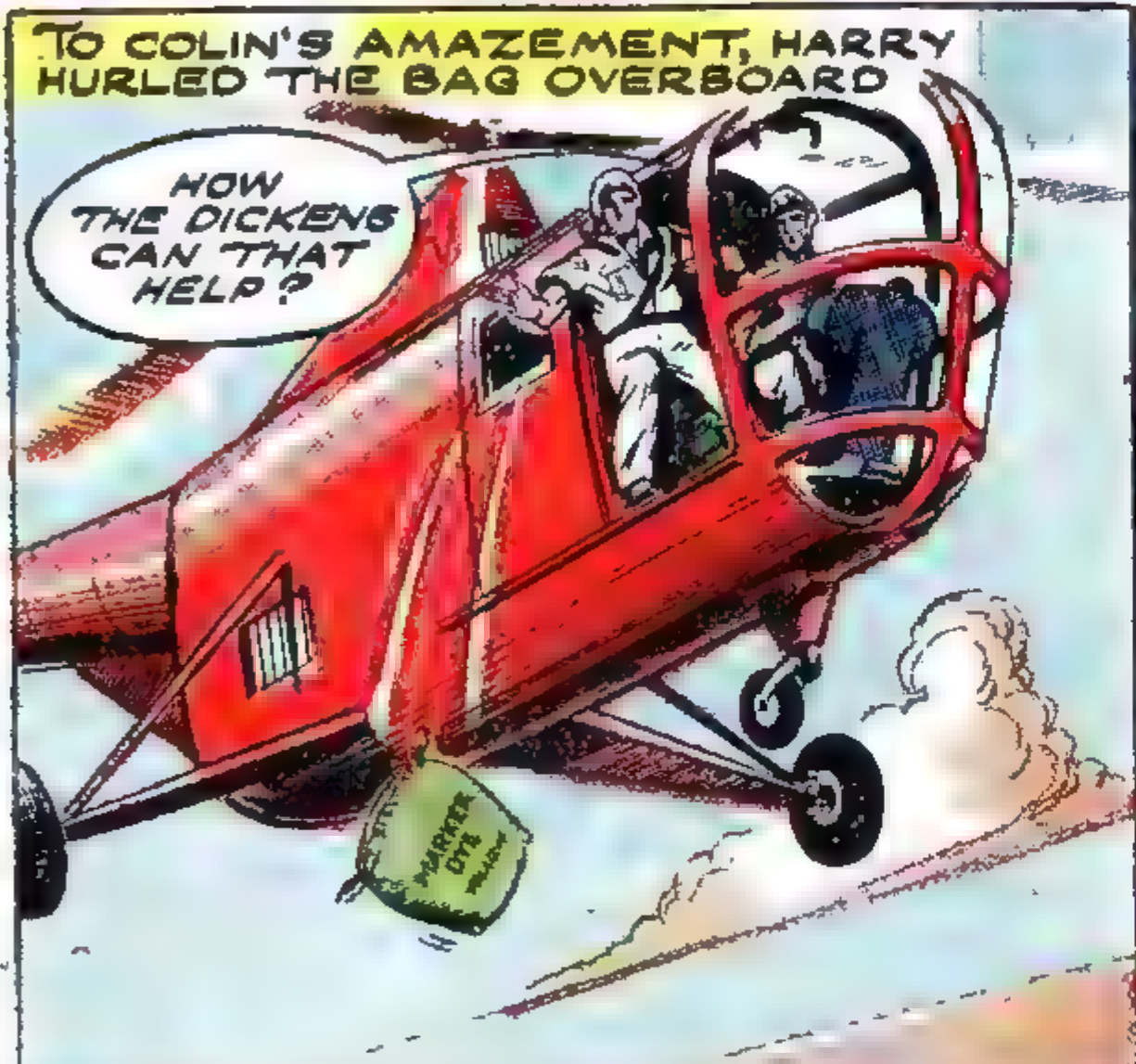


TAKE OVER THE CONTROLS! I'VE GOT AN IDEA



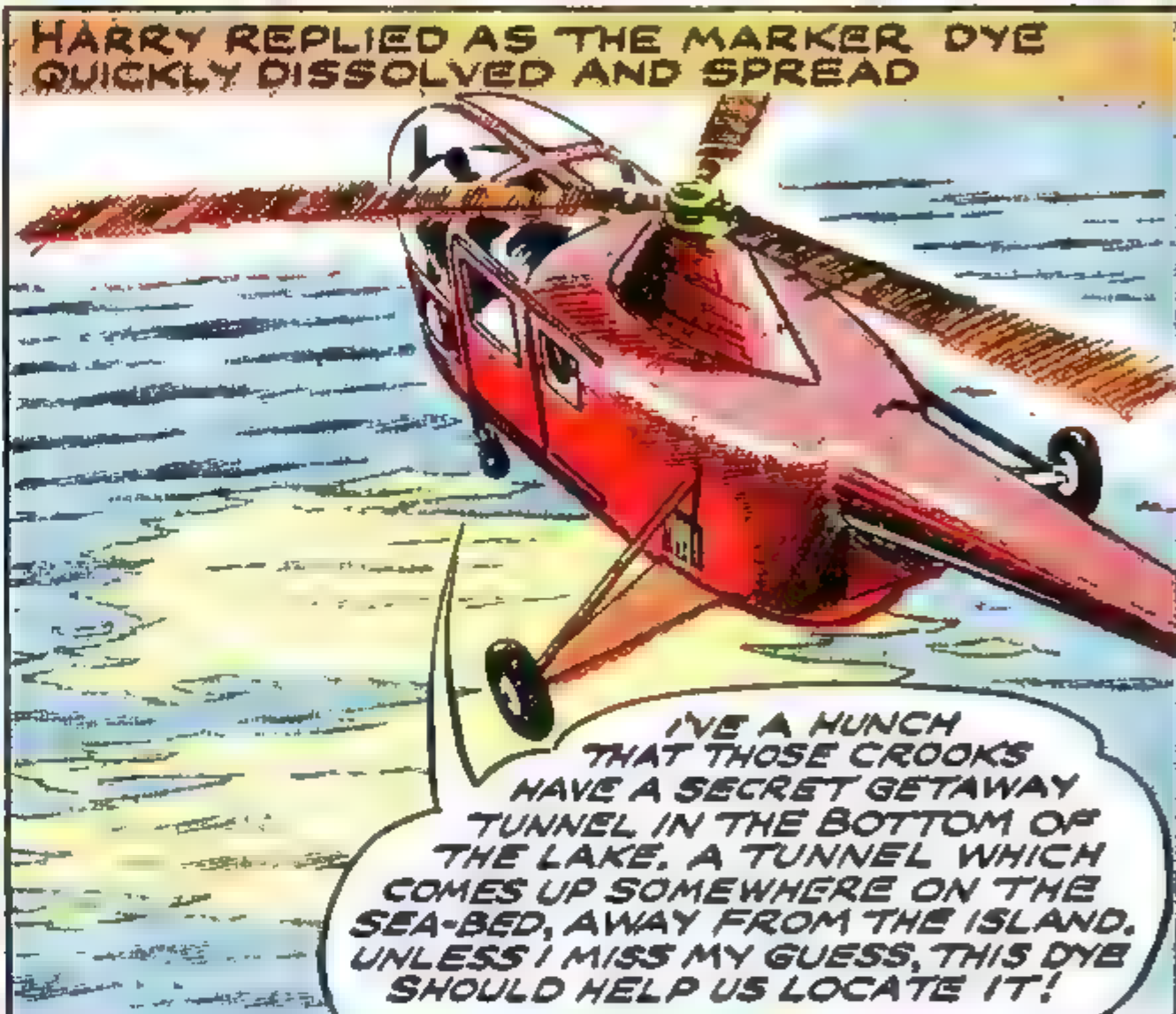
ON BOARD THE HELICOPTER WAS AN INFLATABLE RUBBER DINGHY, FROM IT HARRY LIFTED A BAG OF YELLOW MARKER DYE WHICH COULD BE USED TO INDICATE THE PLANE'S POSITION IN THE EVENT OF A CRASH IN THE SEA

THIS IS THE VERY THING!



TO COLIN'S AMAZEMENT, HARRY HURLED THE BAG OVERBOARD

HOW THE DICKENS CAN THAT HELP?

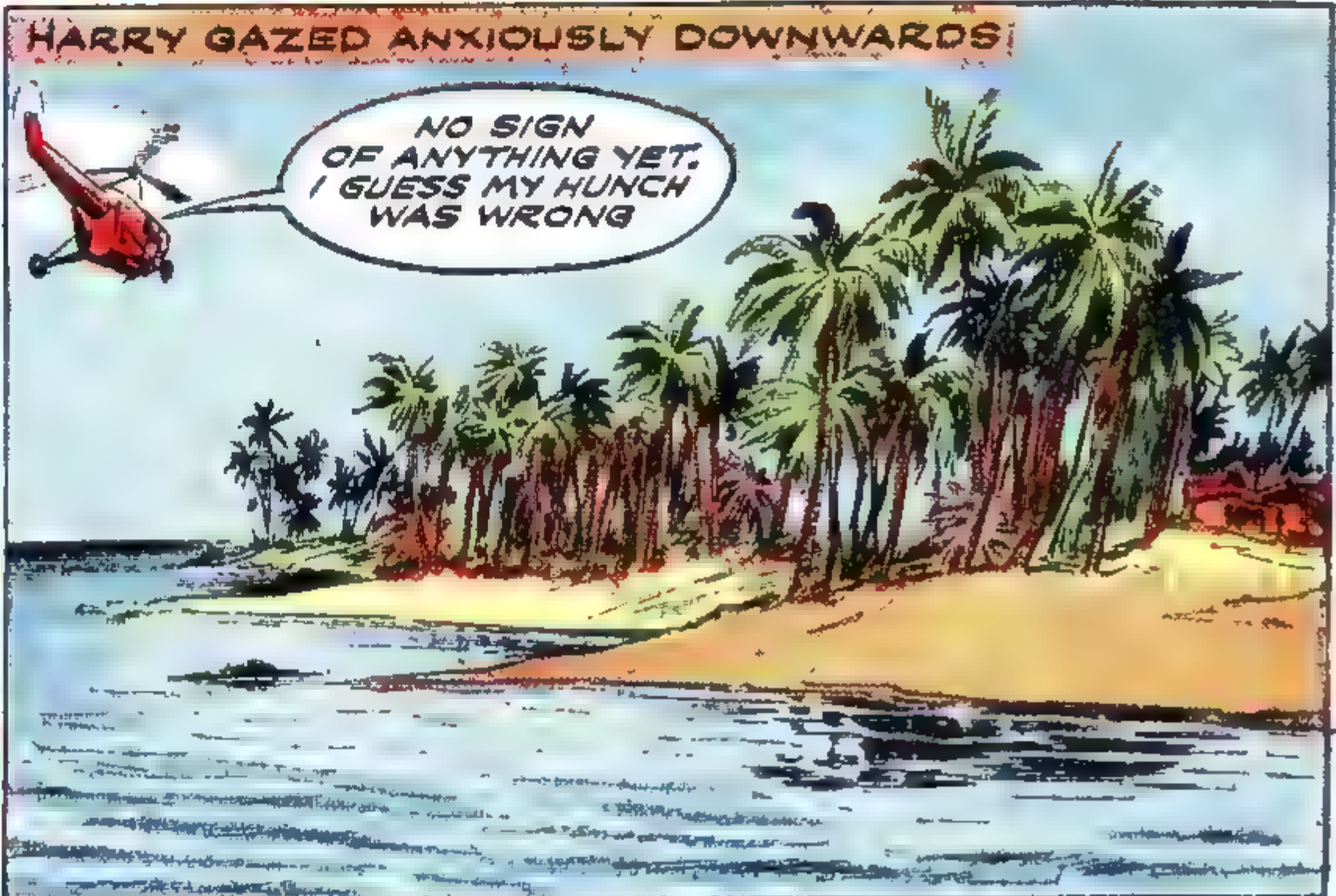


HARRY REPLIED AS THE MARKER DYE QUICKLY DISSOLVED AND SPREAD

I'VE A HUNCH THAT THOSE CROOKS HAVE A SECRET GETAWAY TUNNEL IN THE BOTTOM OF THE LAKE. A TUNNEL WHICH COMES UP SOMEWHERE ON THE SEA-BED, AWAY FROM THE ISLAND. UNLESS I MISS MY GUESS, THIS DYE SHOULD HELP US LOCATE IT!



HEAD OUT TO SEA, CIRCLE THE COAST--AND KEEP YOUR EYES SKINNED FOR A PATCH OF YELLOW WATER!



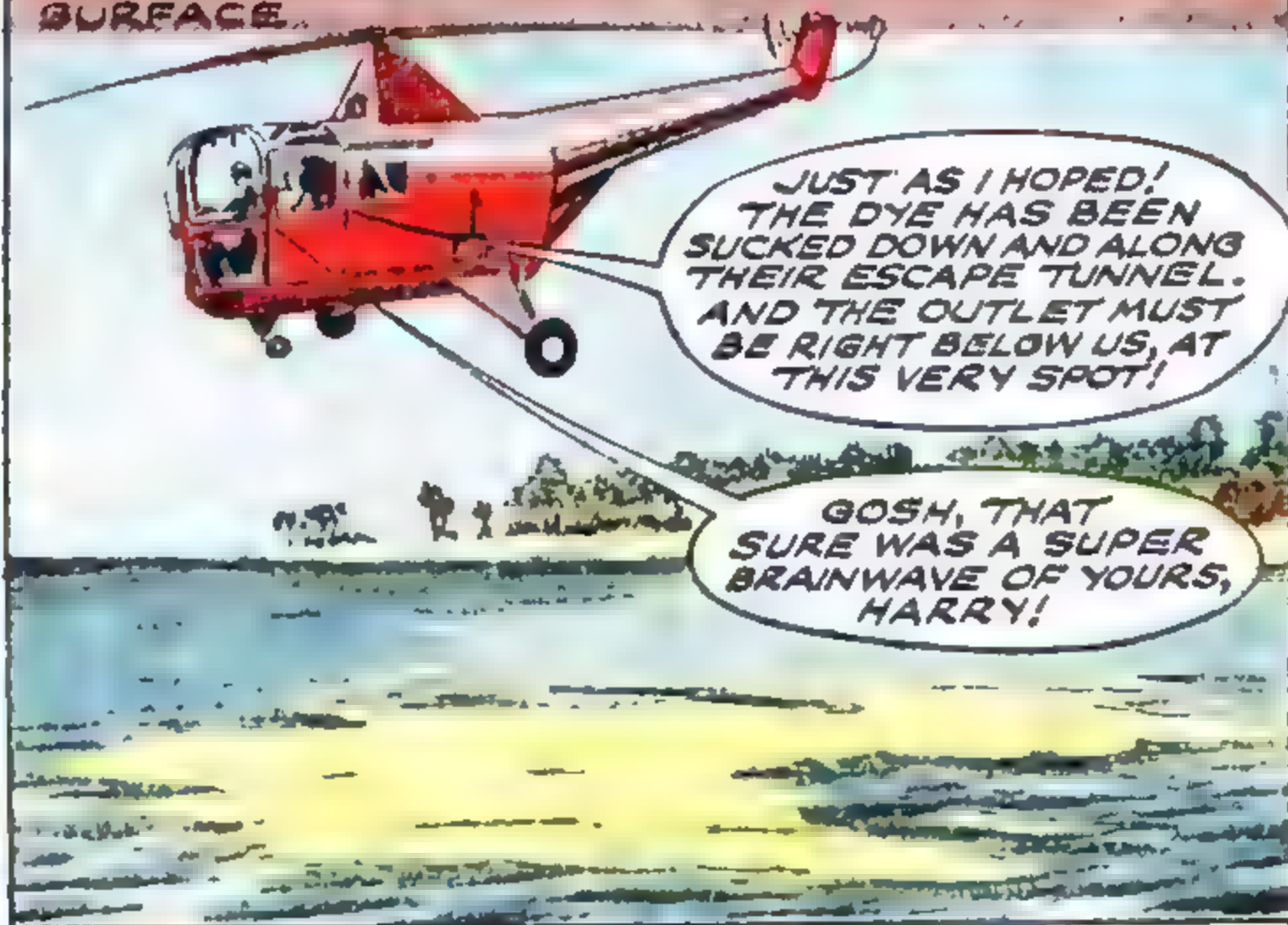
HARRY GAZED ANXIOUSLY DOWNWARDS!

NO SIGN OF ANYTHING YET. I GUESS MY HUNCH WAS WRONG

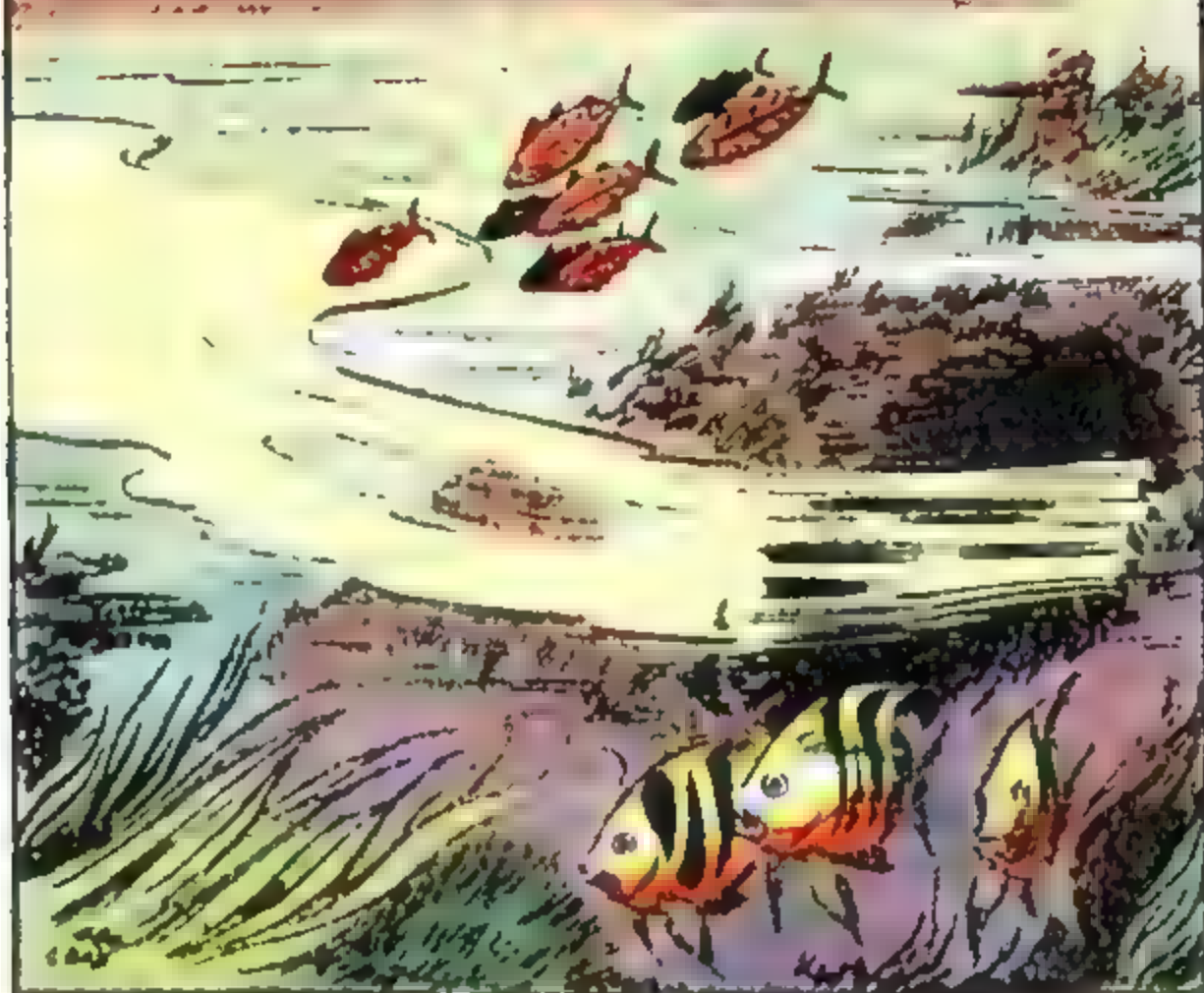
BUT SUDDENLY HE GAVE A YELL
OF EXCITEMENT



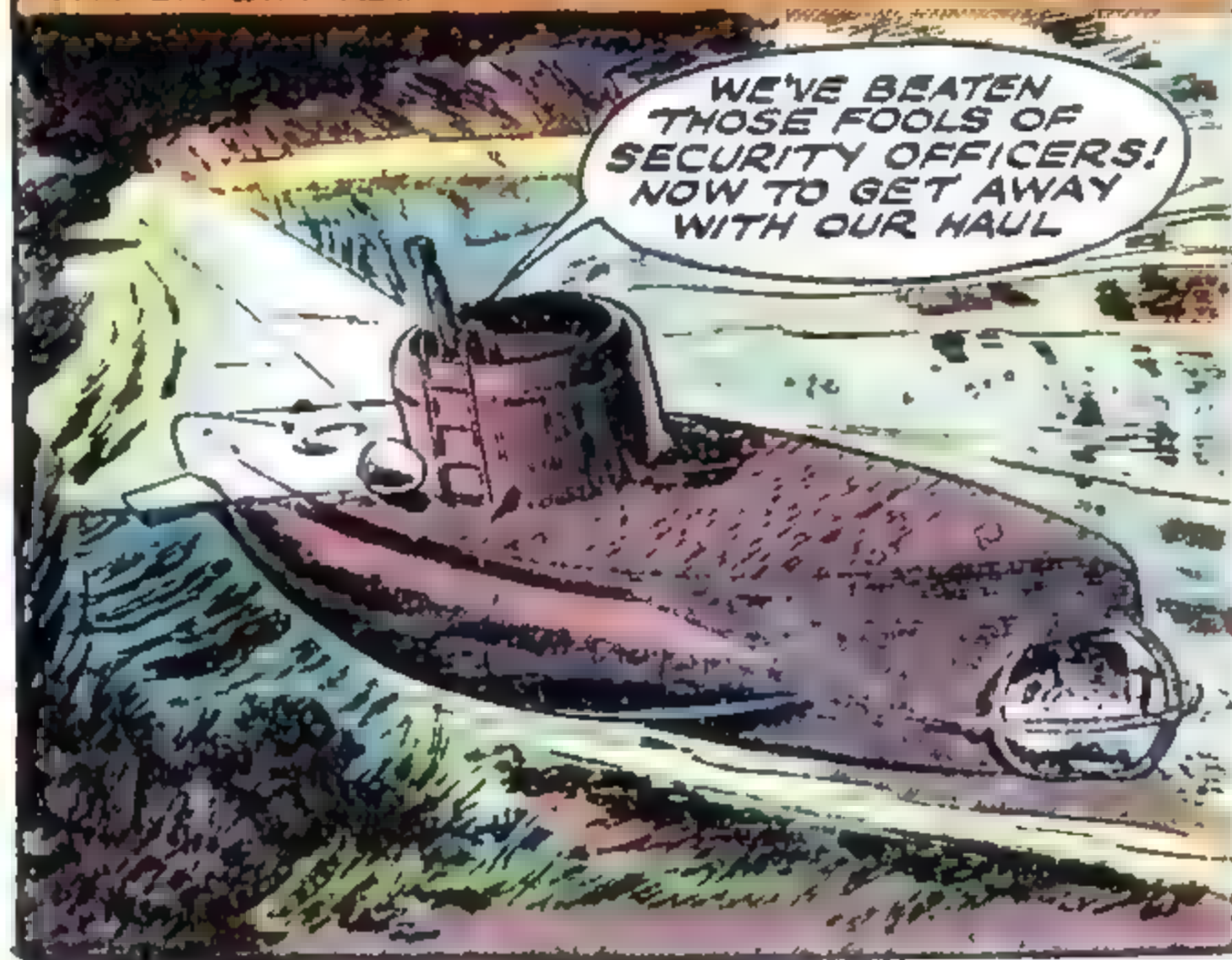
THEY FLEW TO WHERE A PATCH OF MARKER
DYE WAS BUBBLING AND SPREADING ON THE
SURFACE.



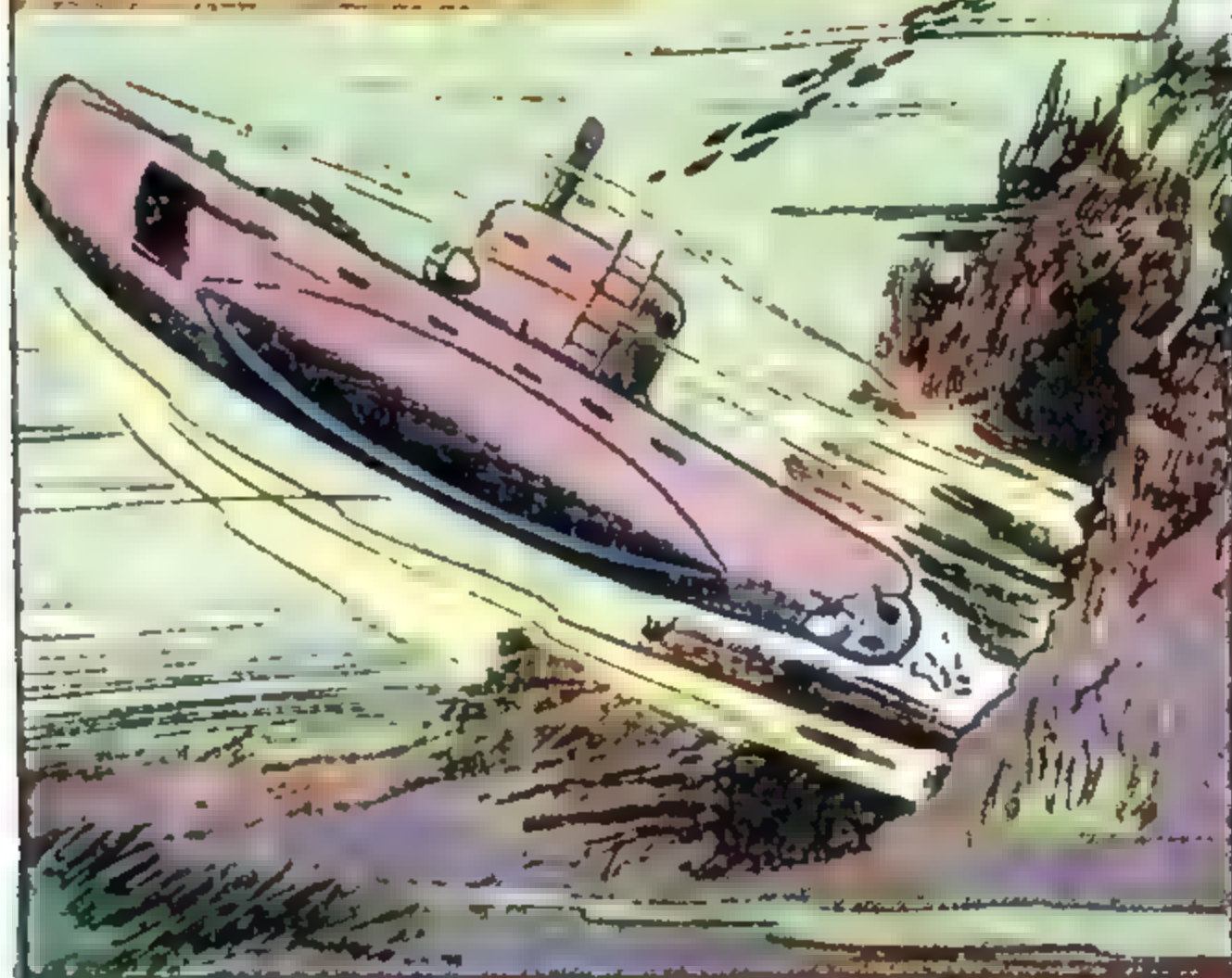
MEANWHILE, THE MARKER DYE
STREAMED UPWARDS FROM THE
SEAWARD END OF THE TUNNEL



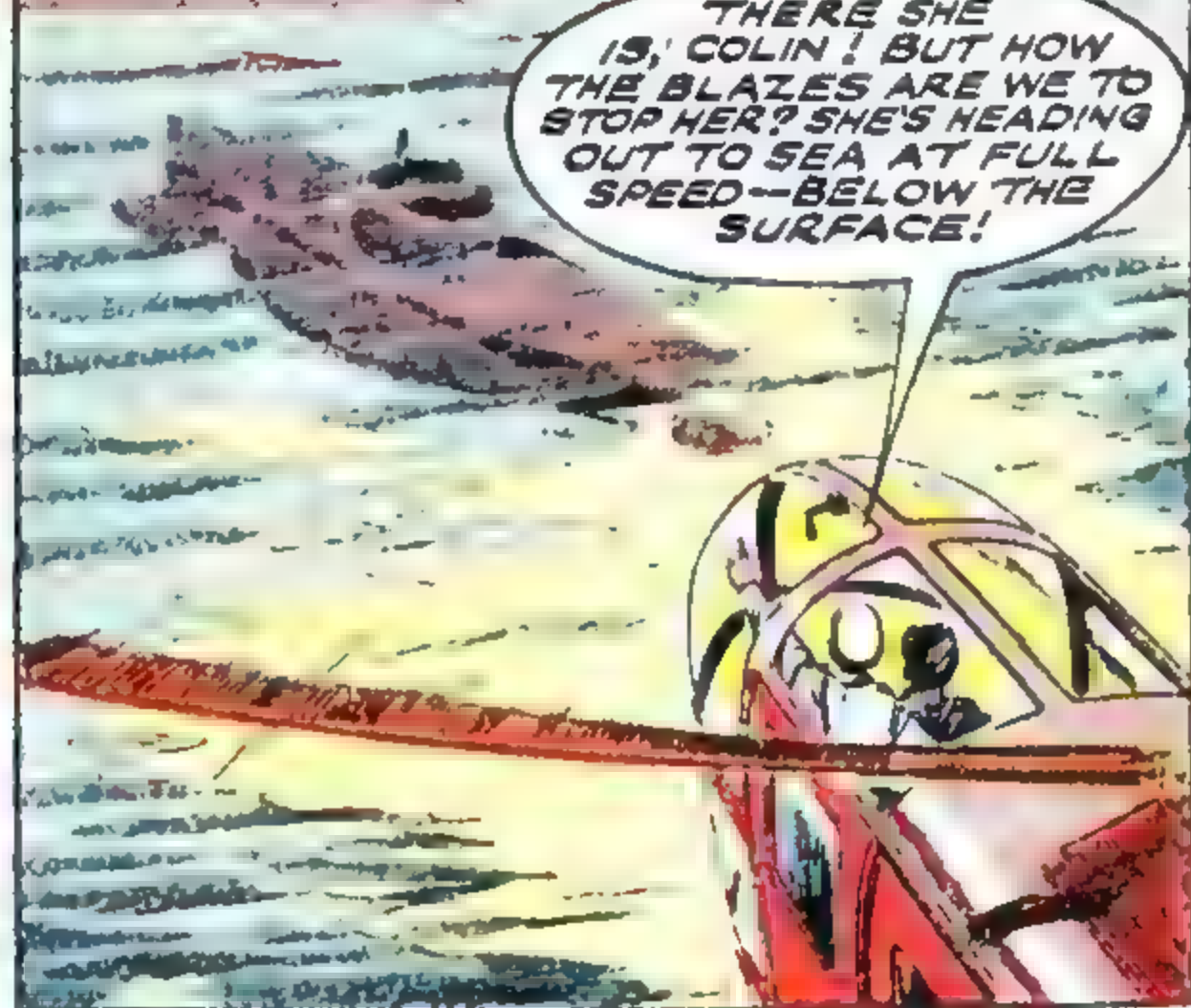
AND ALONG THE UNDERWATER PASSAGE
WHICH LINKED THE LAKE WITH THE SEA -

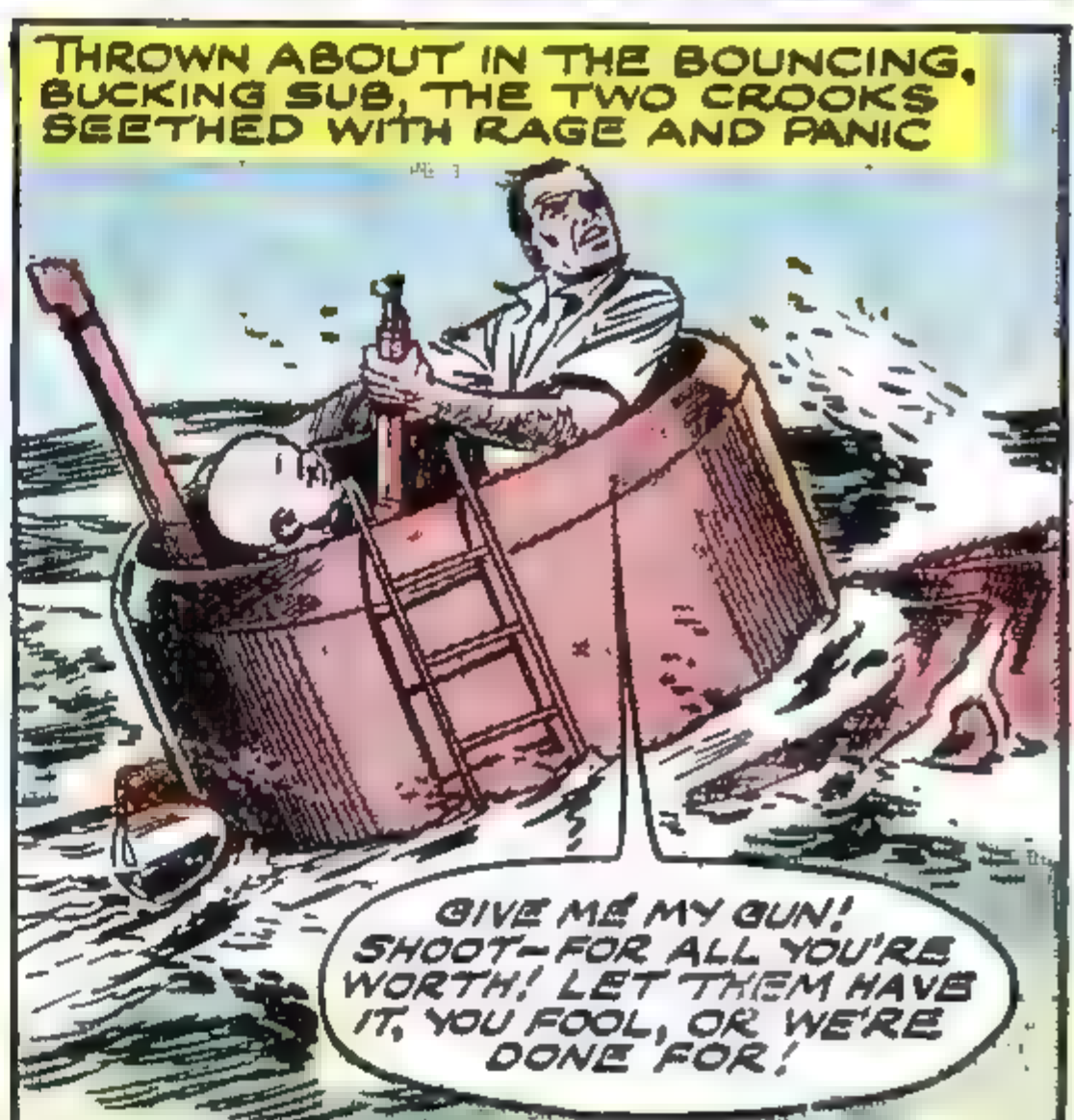
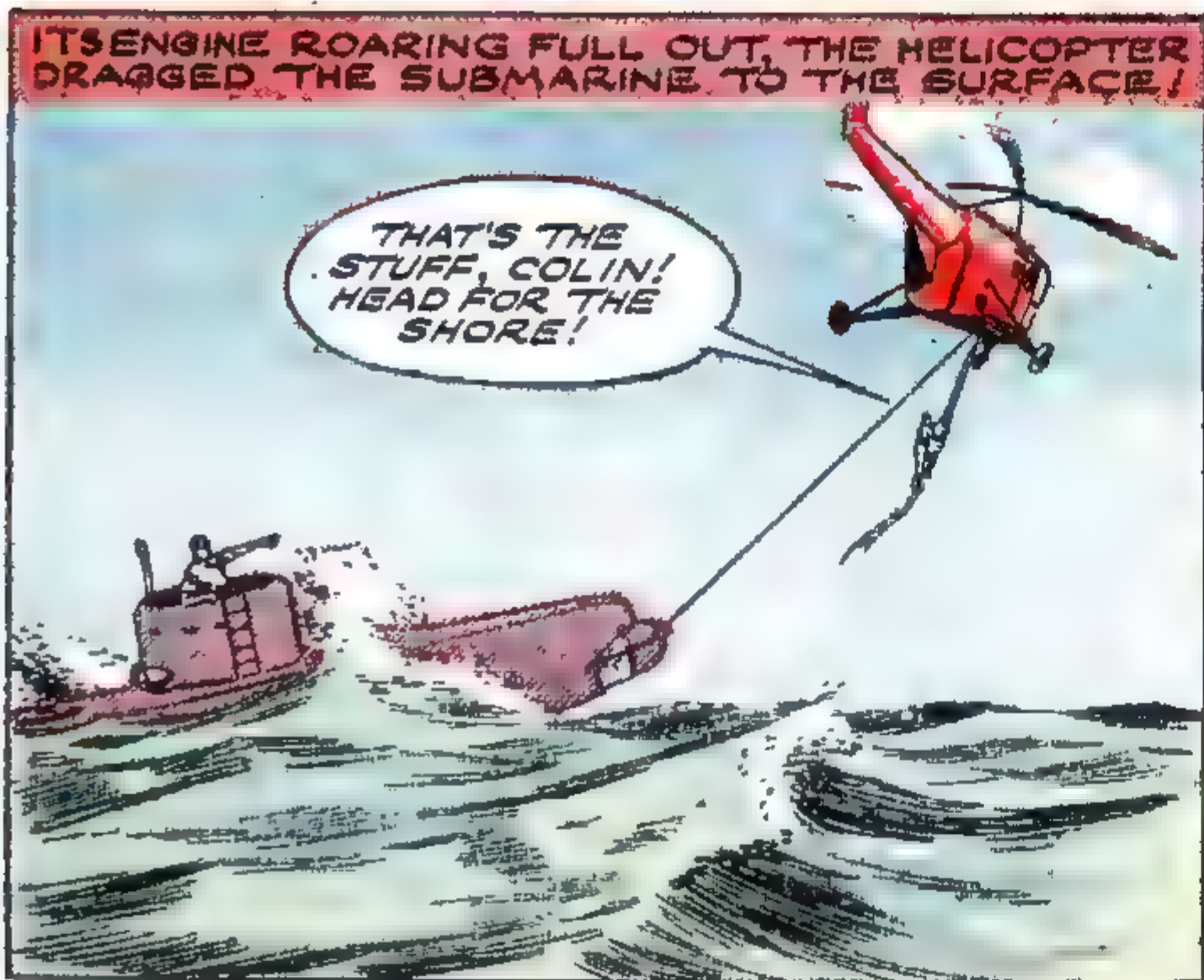
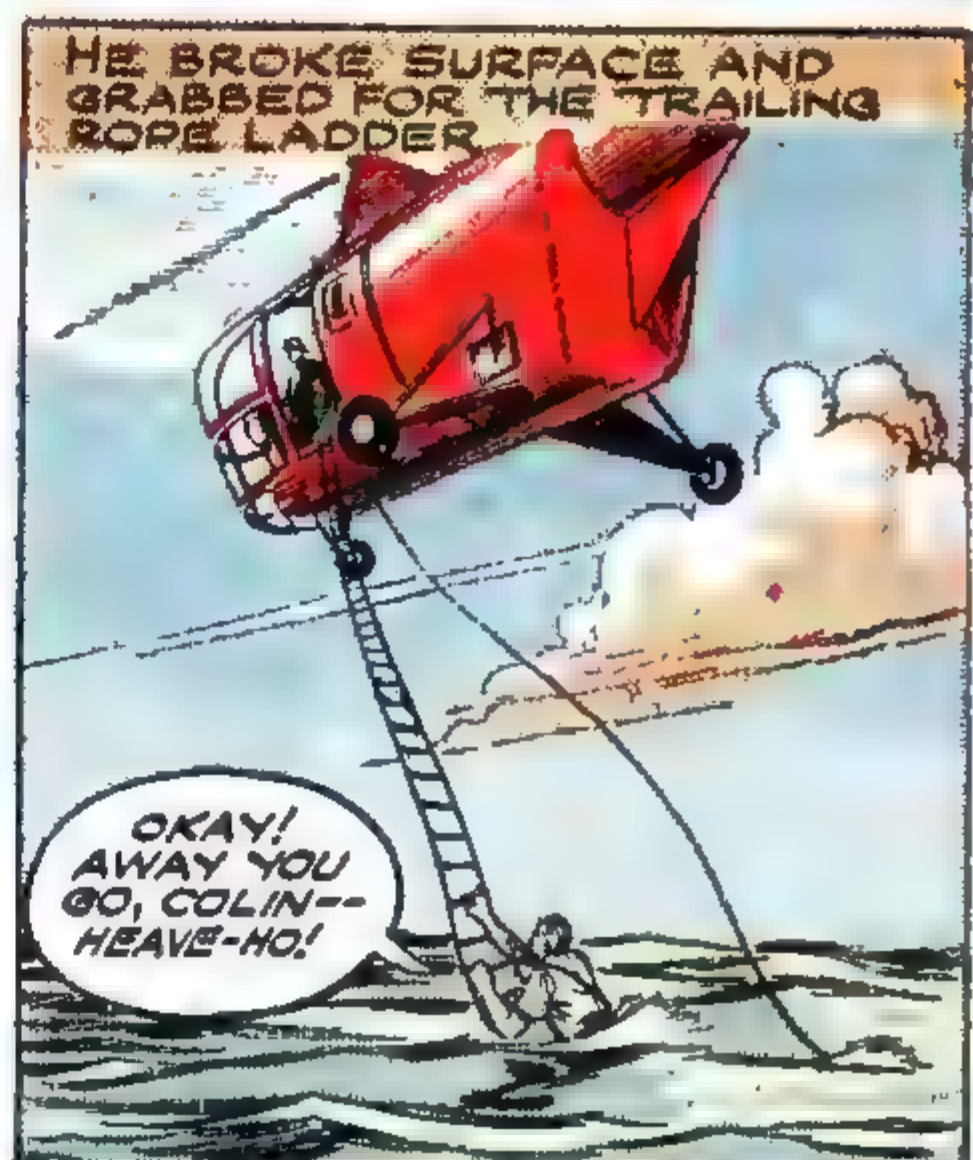
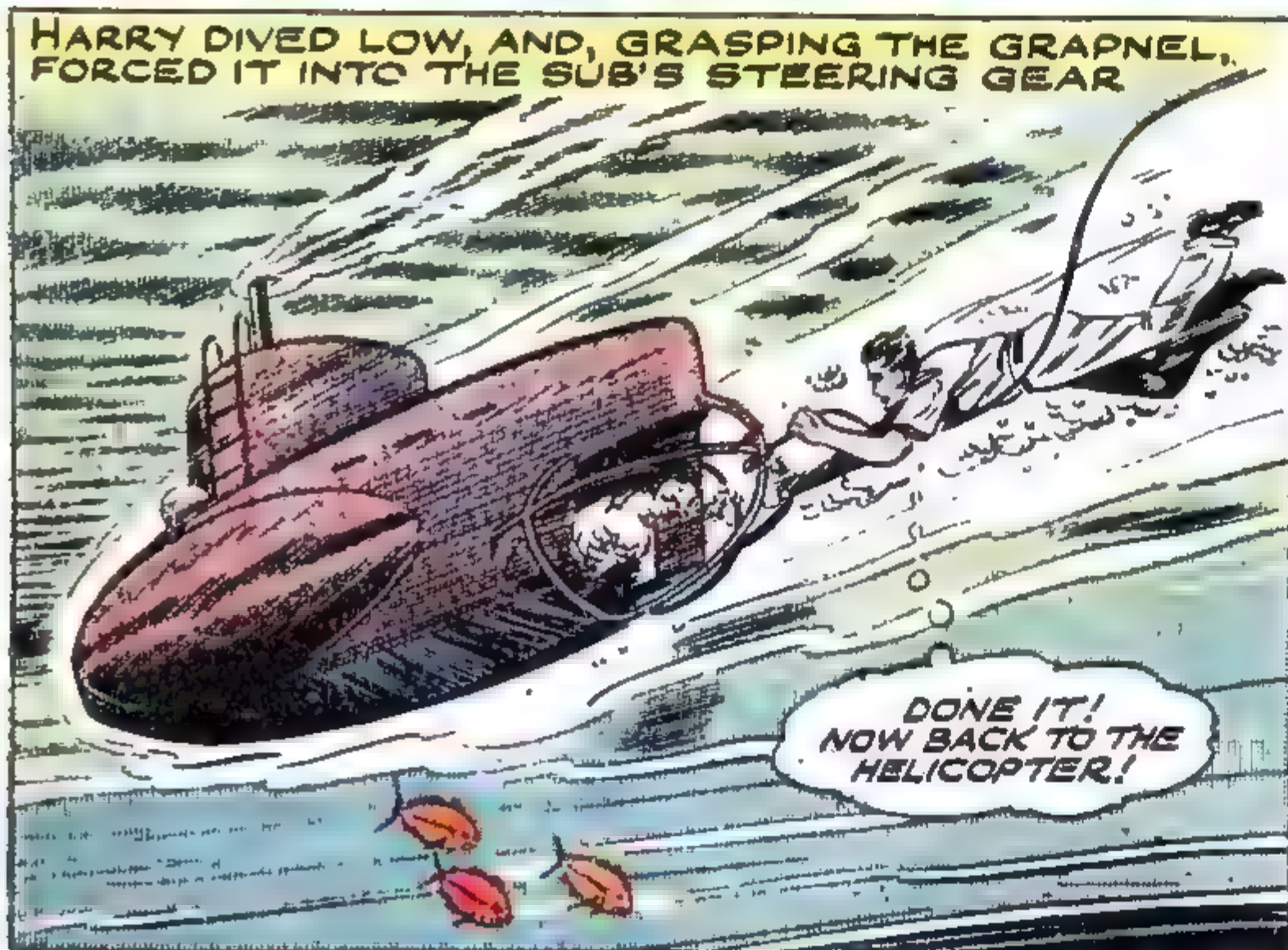
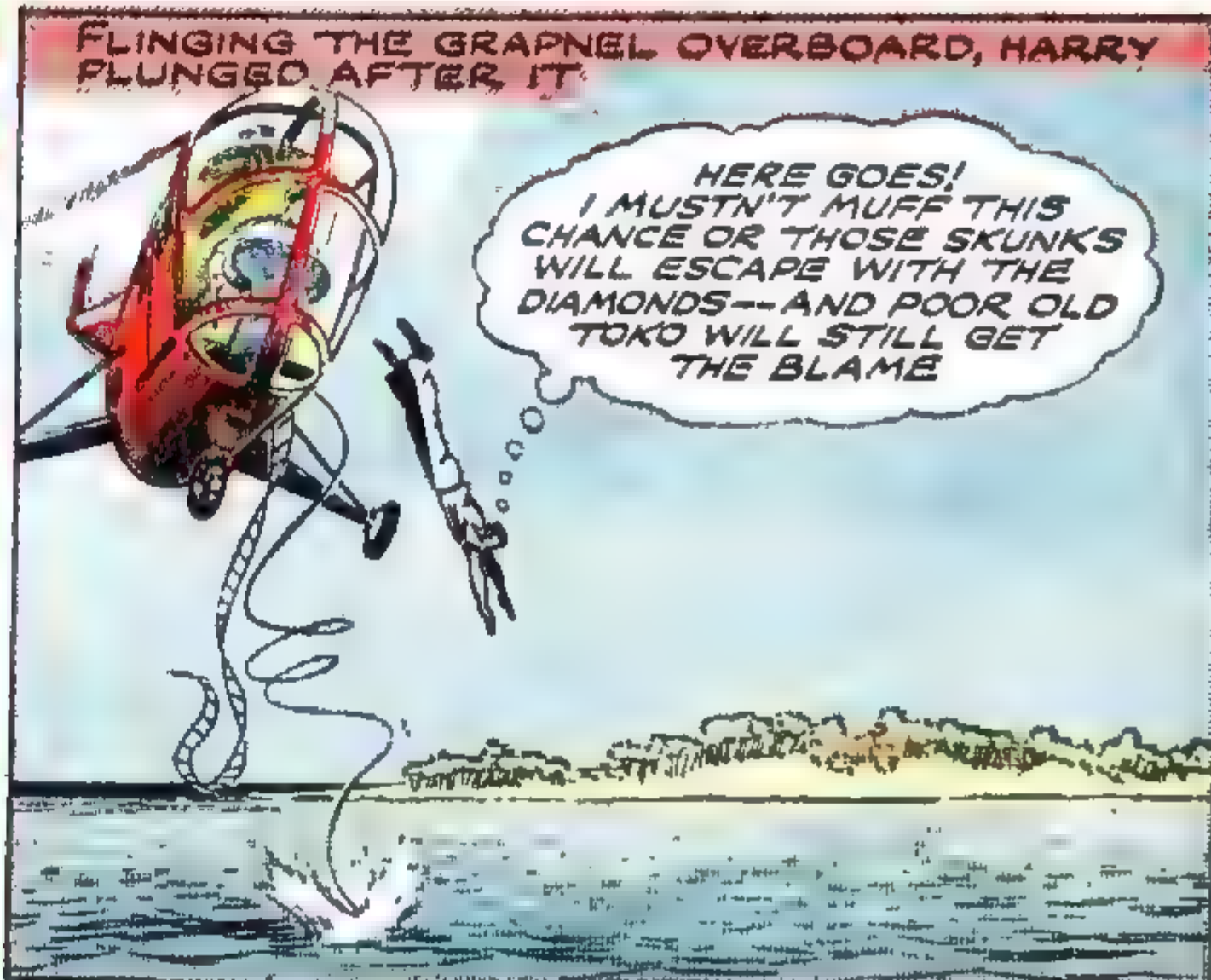
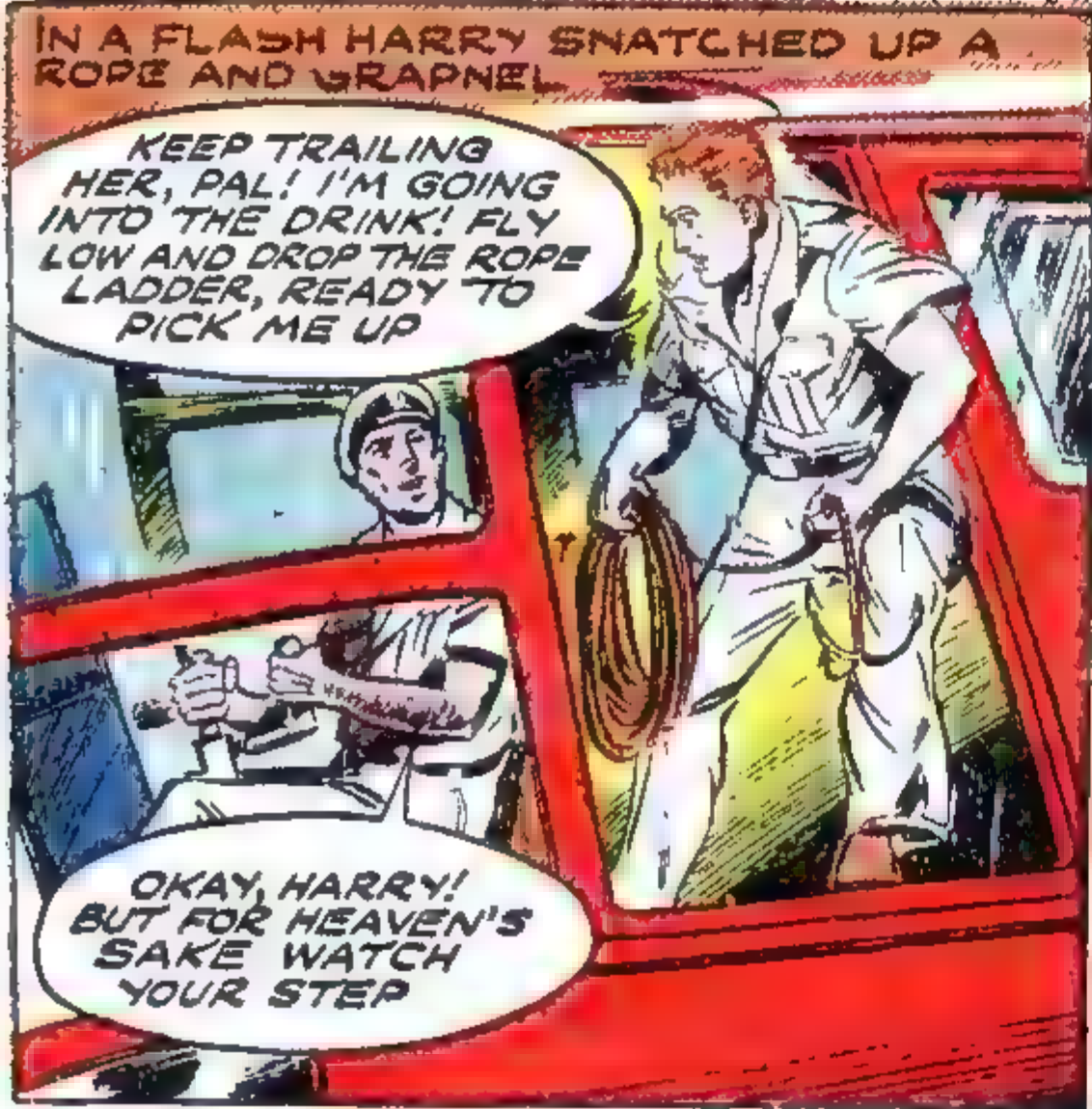


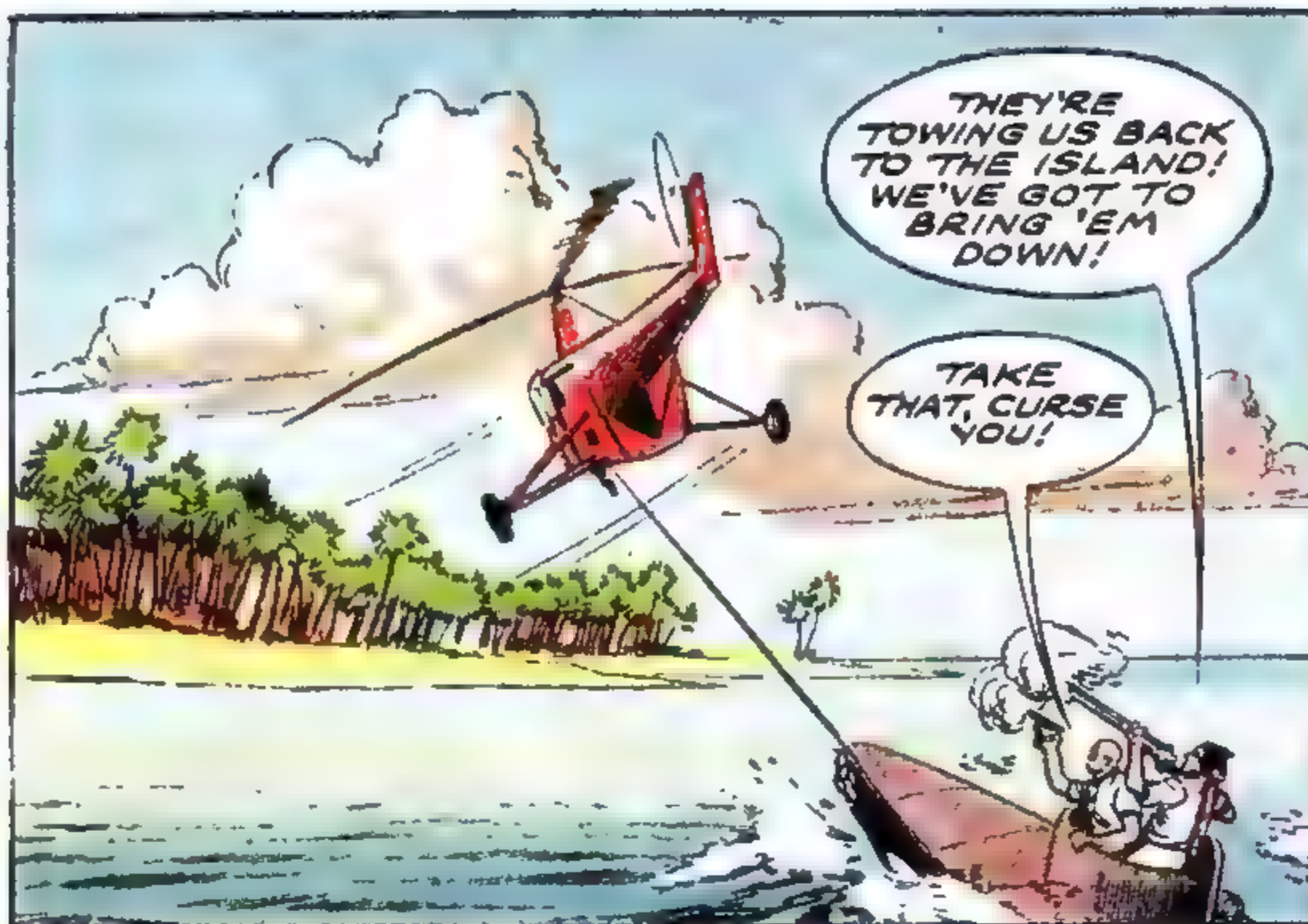
THE MIDGET SUBMARINE EMERGED
FROM THE TUNNEL



AND IN THE HOVERING
HELICOPTER -







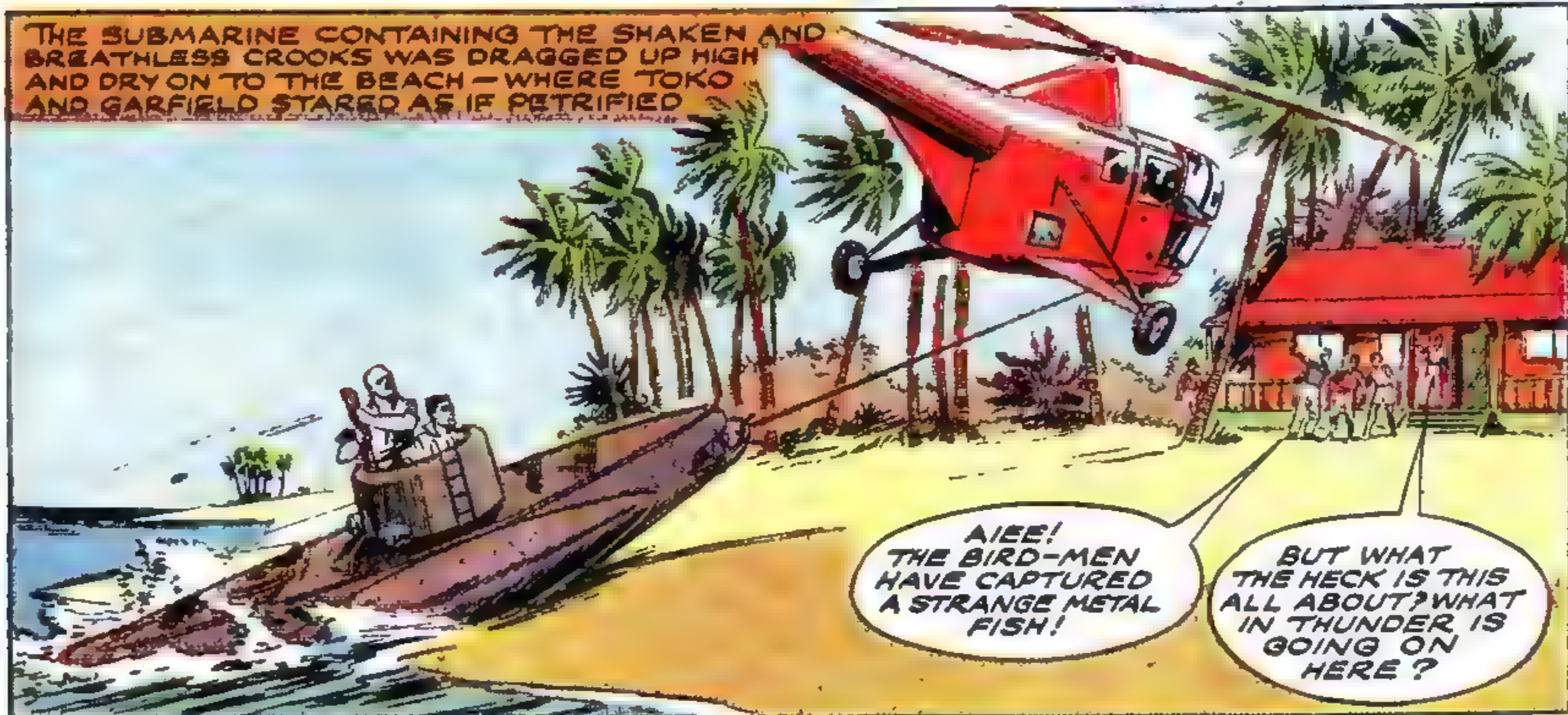
THEY'RE
TOWING US BACK
TO THE ISLAND!
WE'VE GOT TO
BRING 'EM
DOWN!

TAKE
THAT, CURSE
YOU!



A STREAM OF BULLETS
PEPPERED THE AIRCRAFT,
BUT STILL COLIN PRESSED
ON

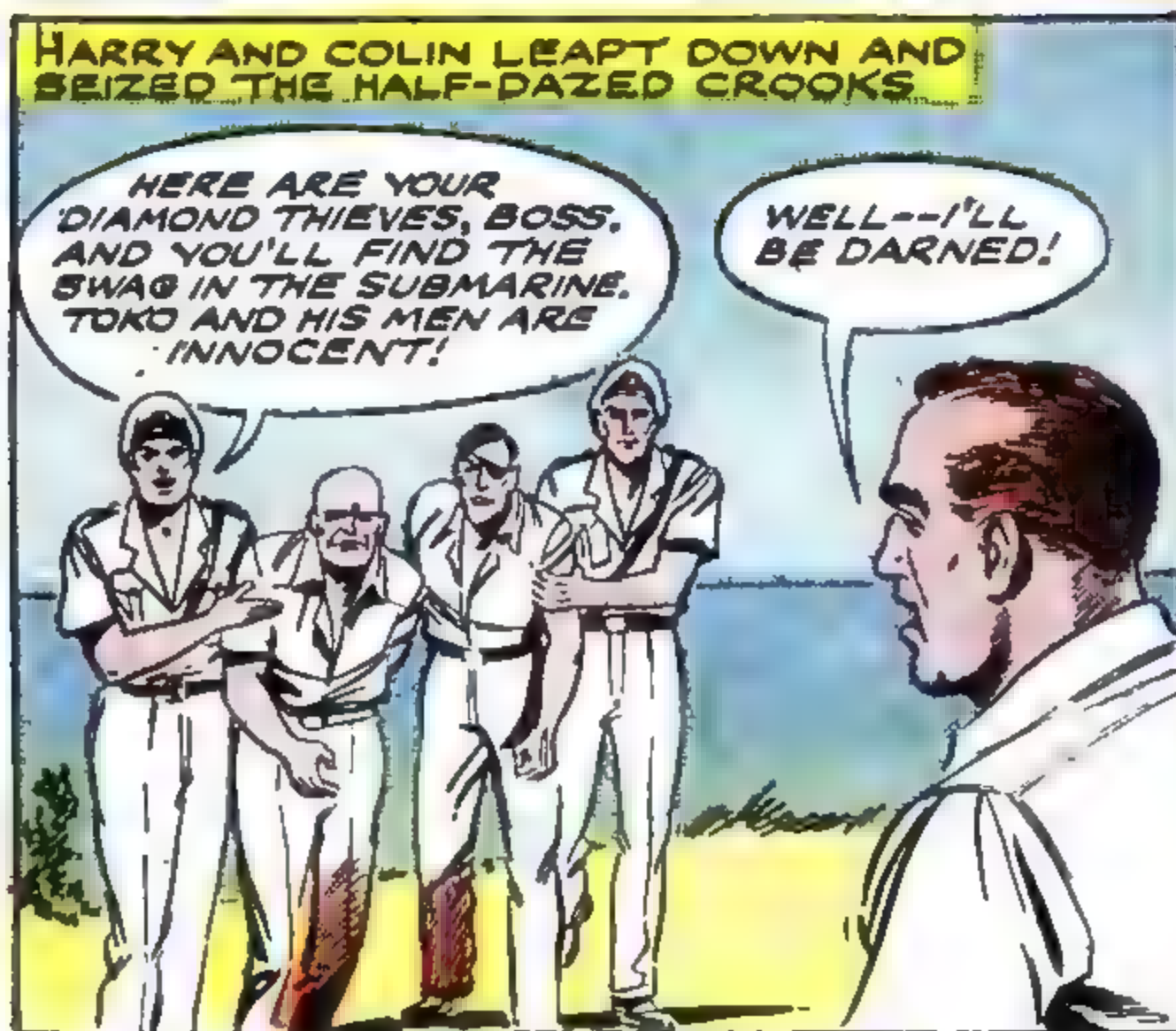
KEEP IT UP, PAL!
WE'RE NEARLY THERE!



THE SUBMARINE CONTAINING THE SHAKEN AND
BREATHLESS CROOKS WAS DRAGGED UP HIGH
AND DRY ON TO THE BEACH—WHERE TOKO
AND GARFIELD STARED AS IF PETRIFIED

AIEE!
THE BIRD-MEN
HAVE CAPTURED
A STRANGE METAL
FISH!

BUT WHAT
THE HECK IS THIS
ALL ABOUT? WHAT
IN THUNDER IS
GOING ON
HERE?



HARRY AND COLIN LEAPT DOWN AND
SEIZED THE HALF-DAZED CROOKS

HERE ARE YOUR
DIAMOND THIEVES, BOSS,
AND YOU'LL FIND THE
SWAG IN THE SUBMARINE.
TOKO AND HIS MEN ARE
INNOCENT!

WELL--I'LL
BE DARNED!



AND THAT EVENING THE TWO PALS
JOINED THE ISLANDERS IN A GREAT
FEAST

HAIL TO
OUR GOOD WHITE
FRIENDS--TO THE
FLYING WARRIORS
WHO CAPTURED
THE BAD
FELLOWS!

THANKS,
TOKO! THIS SURE
IS BETTER THAN
HAVING TO PUT YOU AND
YOUR WORKMATES IN
THE LOCK-UP--FOR A
CRIME YOU DIDN'T
COMMIT!

THE END.

MAX MALONE OF THE SECRET SERVICE

BY
TREVOR
HUGH



THE BIRD CALLS THAT SPELT DEADLY DANGER

HOLD on, Hutch. I want to check our bearings on the chart. We ought to be nearing the Changari river by now."

Max Malone, the famous Secret Service agent, spoke in a low murmur. In the Malayan jungle whispers carried far on the night breeze. Enemy Japanese might be concealed within rifle shot.

He had come to a halt in a moonlit patch in the silent jungle. Hutch Hall, his loyal assistant, peered watchfully into the darkness of the wild undergrowth while Max intently checked his map by the light of the moon.

They were deep in enemy-occupied Malaya. They had landed secretly from a British light landing craft which had stolen in to a deserted creek, on the coast. It now lay hidden there, awaiting their return.

Both wore packs and carried revolvers. Daringly they had jungle-trekked their dangerous path, from the coast, towards their objective, the Changari river.

Every mile was fraught with peril.

The whole country was over-run by the Japanese army. But Max and Hutch pushed their way onward, fearlessly and resolutely.

Hutch heard his pal give a "Hmm!" of satisfaction.

"Okay, m'lad," Max whispered. "All being well, we should make the river before dawn. Let's shove on."

The mission which had sent them hurriedly and secretly into the dangers of enemy territory was of great importance to the Allies.

In Malaya were the world's finest rubber estates. But when the Japanese invaded Malaya the planters hastily wrecked their rubber plantations, and destroyed their stocks of rubber before fleeing the country. The invaders found nothing but empty warehouses . . . *and they were desperate for rubber!*

But, a few days ago, a smuggled and urgent message, had come through an underground organisation, to the Allies.

Ah Wong, a loyal Malayan friend of the British

A Gripping Story of Tense Jungle Adventure During World War II

had learnt with dismay that the enemy had discovered a vast, undestroyed stock of rubber.

The Japanese had greedily seized this desperately needed rubber hoard. In great secrecy they had rushed it to a hiding-place, storing it there until it could be taken away for shipment to Japan. But Ah Wong had tracked down the store.

To Malaya had daringly come Max and Hutch, risking their lives with every step of the perilous trek towards the Changari, where they were to meet Ah Wong. He was to lead them to the secret store. Max's grim plan was to destroy the rubber by secretly planting fire bombs in its midst.

He darted a glance at the luminous hands of his watch. His brow creased with sudden concern.

"We've got to reach the meeting place with Ah Wong before dawn," he urgently whispered. "And dawn isn't far off."

"Ssh . . . what's that?" Hutch tensely breathed.

Max smothered a grin as he pricked up his ears and listened to the chattering murmur.

"That's the distant sound of the Changari river," he explained. "With luck we'll make it in time."

Hardly had he spoken than with alarming suddenness the call of a bird shrilled from away on their right.

Max seized Hutch's arm and halted him.

"Listen," he gritted.

An answering call trilled from behind them. In the darkness Hutch saw Max's jaw stiffen.

"Japs," he breathed. "They are expert at mimicking jungle birds."

"How do you know it's Japs, not real birds?" Hutch murmured wonderingly, yet not doubting his chum.

A grim chuckle came from Max.

"Because that particular bird is silent before the dawn; and, by thunder, it will be dawn in a few minutes. Jeepers—listen to those bird calls."

His tone was sharp with increasing anxiety. In a brief while the tropical dawn would sweep away the concealing darkness. Before that occurred, it was vital for them to reach the meeting-place with Ah Wong, on the bank of the Changari river.

The bird calls were now shrilling from all directions. Steadily, menacingly they were closing around the chums.

"Gosh, have the Japs twigged us?" Hutch hissed.

"Not unless we've been betrayed," came the grim reply. "And I'd stake my life Ah Wong wouldn't do that."

Whatever the risk, they had to push on, towards their goal. At a silent nod from Max they stole to their feet from where they were crouching under a lanthorn shrub. Soundlessly, they crept in the direction of the river.

Each grasping his revolver, eyes darting from side

to side, moving swiftly but in complete silence, they made rapid progress through the man-high grass. It was now a desperate race against the tropical dawn.

The murmur of the river was fast becoming almost a roar. With every onward step they could hear its torrential gurgling as it sped between its banks towards the distant sea.

"Look, Hutch." Max gripped his chum's arm in sudden excitement, pointing. "There, can you see it? A hut!"

Hutch strained his eyes towards the faint outline of the river, which now could distantly be seen glinting in the last rays of the moonlight. On the bank was a vague shape. It was a hut.

"That's where we're to meet Ah Wong," Max gritted in quiet triumph. "It's a ferryman's hut. Ah Wong is the ferryman."

Eagerly, with a caution born of long jungle warfare, they crept swiftly towards their objective. At last they reached the edge of a small clearing. Looming squatly on its far side, on the river bank and beside a small jetty, was the hut.

And, at that instant, as though a curtain had been drawn back, the sky was swept clear of the night. The tropical dawn had come. Max gritted a warning. They flattened themselves in the grass.

"Great guns . . . look."

As they gazed towards the hut, the mystery of the night-bird calls was abruptly explained.

Into the clearing crept a group of Japanese soldiers, guns at the ready, stealing silently towards the hut's door. The leading N.C.O. booted the door open. The soldiers poured inside. A moment later they reappeared. Gripped between two of them was a Malay native.

"Ah Wong," Max gritted in a tense whisper. "They've arrested him. By thunder, they must have found out he is spying for us."

The loyal Malay was marched away, out of sight along a jungle path. Max watched him disappear, his eyes clouded and grim. Only too well he knew what would be the brave Ah Wong's fate. He would be tried as a spy, and shot.

"Now we can't destroy the rubber store," Hutch groaned. "Without Ah Wong, we can't find it."

Before Max could reply, with terrifying suddenness a dawn devil-wind suddenly rushed along the river bank, flattening down the reeds and grass. It swept over them. The grass in which they crouched was laid flat on the ground.

In a moment, the weird wind had gone. But it had done its damage. The two Secret Service agents were revealed.

Shrill yells of fury burst from enemy throats. The Japanese leapt towards the two Britishers, rage and hate in their eyes.

Max's eyes darted desperately towards the river, and the jetty. He roared a sudden order at Hutch.

"The ferry boat! Come on, Hutch. Into it!"

Hurling themselves towards it, they vaulted down into the boat. Guns barked. Bullets hissed into the fast water of the racing torrent as Max slashed through the rope haltering the ferry to the jetty. In a moment it was being swept downstream. And as it sped from the bank Max saw, with a gasp, it had no oars.

The banks swept upward, higher and higher. Japs raced along the rising bank, firing as they ran. The chums flattened themselves in the bottom of the boat. Over its gunwale they returned the fire. The Japanese leapt for cover.

"Jiminy," Max gritted. "This is a pickle, m'lad. We've no oars. The boat is running away with us. And . . . Ah Wong is a prisoner in Jap hands, so can't lead us to the rubber store."

"And—my gosh, look ahead, Max," Hutch yelled in alarm.

Max jerked round. His lips gripped in consternation.

The river was diving into a narrow channel, through which it was racing in a thunderous torrent. The banks rose in precipitous walls. High above, Japanese soldiers waited, ready to pour rifle fire down on the helpless boat and its oarless crew.

Crash!

With a shudder of every timber, the boat was tossed deep into the arms of a flood-torn tree which now was held firm against a rock in mid-stream. The boat was held fast. Other debris rapidly piled up around it.

From high above came excited yells. The Japanese could see that the boat and its crew were helpless prisoners, and easy targets. Hutch let out a roar of angry dismay.

"We're sitting ducks for the Japs. They'll drill us with lead!"

And as he spoke, from above came a hail of bullets!

RESCUED FROM THE PRISON-CAGE!

THE Japanese were good marksmen. It would be only seconds before their shots would find their targets.

"Turn the boat over," Max roared to Hutch, his voice almost lost in the hiss of the speeding river. "Quick, m'lad."

As he spoke Max hurled himself to one side of the boat. Hutch leapt to his aid. Bullets screamed round them. Splinters snicked from the boat as the hot lead smacked into it.

With violent energy Max rocked the boat. Up and down it surged, but still the gunwales failed to ship water.

"Overboard," Max snapped, leaping over the side.

As he went, he grasped the gunwale. Hutch vaulted into the river, beside him. From above the Japanese redoubled their fire, and the boat was drilled with holes. Next instant, it was turning turtle . . . and as it capsized the hull covered the chums like a wooden shell.

"Try to kick the boat free from the tree," Max spluttered in a muffled voice. "I'm betting on the Japs thinking they've drowned us with their shooting."

Heads just clear of the water, underneath the upturned and bullet-riddled boat, they kicked with desperate strength, thrusting against the flood-jammed tree.

"It's no go," Hutch gasped, spitting water. "The boat is jammed tight between the tree's branches."

The wooden hull trembled and shivered under the impact of the fast-running water. The situation was increasingly desperate. More and more debris was heaping around the boat, imprisoning it.

"There's only one thing to do," Max sang out, above the thunder of the water and the bark of rifle fire. "I'm going to try to lift the boat clear of the tree."

Before Hutch could protest at Max's daring plan, he had dived below the surface.

Cautiously he broke water, and above and around him was the tree's leaf-covered branches. It was these which gripped the boat in their tentacles. Bullets snarled and whined around him, but the Japanese could not see him.

"They're pot-shotting, just in case we're still alive and kicking," Max grimly told himself. "We daren't try to swim downriver. They'd see us—and that would be curtains for Hutch and me. This is our only chance."

He gripped a strong branch between his legs, like a jockey riding a horse. Leaning forward, he grasped the upturned bow of the boat which was held fast against the branch. Taking a deep breath, he heaved. His muscles cracked like whipcords—and the bow lifted.

With startling suddenness, the upturned craft was free. The swift current seized it and tore it from the tree . . . Max made a frantic leap, struck the water, dived and came up under the now fast moving boat. He gasped and sucked in air.

"It's—okay, Hutch," he panted. "The boat is being swept downstream. Listen."

They strained their ears as, clutching the underside of the capsized boat, they were carried along with it over their heads. Only the rush of water could be heard. The shooting had ceased.

"The Japs think we're drowned," Max grinned. "We'll stay here, under the boat, for a while, then

have a cautious dekkko, to see what's going on, on shore."

Soon Max slid from under the upturned gun-wale. Raising his eyes just above the water, he swiftly surveyed the scene.

On the bank from which they had leapt into the boat, was a sight which brought a surprised murmur to his lips.

"Elephants." He eyed them keenly. "They are used to haul timber. It's a working herd of elephants."

Already the boat was sweeping past the herd. Max, looking back, saw that the herd was grazing, then a turn of the fast-running river hid them from his view.

The bank was clear. Max could see no sign of Japanese. Quickly he gave the word to Hutch. Swimming clear of the boat, leaving it to speed on downstream, they swam powerfully and rapidly for the bank. Cautiously, they pulled themselves ashore.

Hardly had they done so than Max was signalling to Hutch to dive into a bed of bamboos. Only just in time were they in hiding themselves. With a roar a large open truck thundered by along the riverside path.

From between the bamboos Max took a swift peep at the bouncing, thundering vehicle as it roared by. His jaws tightened.

The truck was full of Japanese soldiers. In their midst, a tight-lipped prisoner, was Ah Wong.

They did not need to be told where he was being taken. It could only be to a Japanese camp, where he would be swiftly questioned, tried and shot. With his death would die the secret of the store of rubber, which they had come to Malaya to destroy.

"We've got to try to save Ah Wong," Max gritted as the truck bounded out of sight down the track, leaving a cloud of dust in its wake. "Because he tried to help the Allies, he'll be shot without mercy."

"You're right," Hutch eagerly agreed. "Besides, without him we haven't a clue to the rubber hiding place. But . . . how can we rescue him, Max? We don't even know where the Japs are taking him."

"Come on," was the reply. "That dust trail should help us."

In the still air the dust hung almost motionless. The truck was quickly out of sight and beyond their hearing. But its wheel tracks laid a trail which they could follow, until they disappeared into a maze of others, at a point where the track divided and ran away in a number of directions.

But Max did not hesitate. His keen eyes detected motes of dust hovering in the brilliant sunshine, above the route of one of the tracks.

Moving swiftly but with caution, keeping under whatever cover they could find, they sped along the track.

Suddenly Max halted his chum.

They had rounded a turn in the track. Ahead lay a ten-foot high screen of barbed wire. On its far side was a Japanese prison camp. And, even as they sighted it, they were in time to see Ah Wong led away from a table at which were seated Japanese officers.

"They've tried Ah Wong," Max rapped, his tone grim. "He is being put in that prison cage."

The loyal Malay was thrust inside a cage made of stout bamboo poles. An armed sentry guarded it.

"That does it!" Hutch growled. "That means they've found Ah Wong guilty. When will they execute him, Max?"

"At dawn, tomorrow," Max gritted.

His mind was working fast. Because the brave Malayan had tried to help his British friends, he was to pay for it with his life. And—that would mean the end of their plan to prevent the rubber being shipped to Japan!

"Listen, Hutch," he breathed, "I've an idea how we might be able to save Ah Wong," and rapidly he explained.

All day they remained hidden, and as night closed down over the jungle they turned and hurried back along the river bank.

"There they are," whispered Max, and halted. He had led his chum back to the grazing herd of working elephants.

Max had had dealings with elephants before. Using his skill and knowledge he now got the herd on the move, towards the Japanese camp. At the last turn in the track, he slowed them down.

By signals he got their towing leader to take up a massive tree log. With this in its trunk, one end out in front like a battering ram, Max headed it for the barbed wire fence.

The elephant broke into a shambling run. The rest of the herd followed. Max let out a whooping bellow. The shamble became a trot, then a fast run. Again Max yelled . . . and at that the huge elephant leader leapt into a charge.

Tons of mighty muscle hurtled across the clearing, thundering down on the fence. Behind the leader came the rest of the herd, now squealing and bellowing as it followed towards the fence. And, with a crash and rending of metal, the battering ram smashed into the barbed wire and steel supports.

On the heels of the herd raced Max and Hutch. Startled howls echoed from the prison camp as the herd burst through the wire. Japanese soldiers scattered and ran. In their haste and fear they did not see the two British Secret Service agents racing towards the prison cage.

The armed sentry spun round as Max leapt out of the darkness and confusion. Too late he saw them and swung up his rifle. Max's fist cracked against his jaw. He fell, stunned.

Max seized the key from the fallen man's belt. In a trice, the gate was open. Ah Wong, his eyes alight with relief, leapt free. Together, in the darkness, they sped back to the gap in the wire.

Shots shattered the night. The Japanese had seen them, but already the chums and Ah Wong were through the fence. In seconds they reached the surrounding jungle, and with Max in the lead they raced clear of the camp and their bewildered pursuers.

At last they halted, panting. Max eyed Ah Wong. "Now, quickly, Ah Wong," he gasped. "Lead us to the Japs' hiding place, where they have hidden the rubber. We are going to destroy it before they can ship it away to Japan."

"I show you," grinned Ah Wong. "Come—this way!"

They sped through the jungle. As dawn broke, they came to a big clearing, on the river bank. Fronting them was a huge warehouse. As Max's eyes lighted on it, they filled with dismay.

The warehouse doors stood wide. It was empty. They were too late! The rubber was gone!

MAX MALONE—DAM BUSTER

FOR a moment Max's gaze was riveted on the empty warehouse. Then he peered out to the river beyond.

"By thunder. Look," he gritted. "That's where the rubber is now. In those barges, anchored in the river. They are waiting to be towed down the river, to the port."

On the quayside an aged native dozed in the sun. Ah Wong slipped away, crossed the quay and squatted down beside him. The chums saw him talking to the man.

"You quite right," Ah Wong told Max a few moments later. "Japs loaded all rubber into the barges. Tomorrow, a ship comes. It will tow barges down river, to port. Rubber put in big ship, which go quickly to Japan. Japs much need the rubber in Japan."

Max stood tensely gazing out at the floating barges. His thoughts raced. He had until the next day to find a plan to stop the rubber going down-river, on its way to Japan.

The barges were of steel, so they couldn't set them on fire by sending a floating raft of fire amid them. Nor could they board them, to set each on fire in turn. Armed sentries could clearly be seen on the tiny afterdeck of each vessel.



While Hutch held the Japanese soldiers at bay, Max desperately opened fire on the dam below. Hidden among the branches were three bombs. To destroy the dam he'd got to hit one of them!

His brow was creased with the intensity of his desperate thinking. Suddenly, it cleared as his gaze fastened on the river and a piece of debris sweeping along on its fast current.

"Come on, Hutch and Ah Wong," he rapped. "There's just a chance we can yet stop the Japs shipping that rubber to Japan."

He didn't stop to explain. Moving quickly he led the way up-river, in the cover of the tall river reeds. He knew they had need for the utmost speed coupled with caution, for the Japanese would be out in force, looking for Ah Wong and his rescuers.

The river bank began to rise, while the river itself narrowed. Steadily they climbed until, looking down, Hutch saw the river was now far beneath them, racing through the narrow gorge in which, only a few hours ago, he and Max had been trapped.

His eyes suddenly fastened on the tree against which their boat had been held in mid-stream.

Above the roar of the water came a yell from Max.

"Give a hand," and Hutch saw Max heaving against a fallen log.

Wonderingly, Hutch leapt to obey, with Ah Wong helping, also. They saw the log tumble over the edge of the gorge. Down it sped and crashed in to the fast-running water. It hurtled along . . . and brought up against the tree which was held by the tongue of rock rising from the river bed.

"Good work," Max roared. "Now for this one,"

A moment later a second log was piling up against the first.

From his pack Max took a hand grenade. Cutting a long length of liana vine which hung from the towering trees, he tied it to the grenade. Carefully, standing on the very edge of the gorge wall, he swung it out over the water.

Filled with curious wonder at Max's strange action, Hutch saw him skilfully swing the grenade, on the end of the tough vine, guiding it as it went down until, with a final swirl of the vine, Max jerked it between the two logs, below.

Cutting a second vine, he repeated his strange performance, watched by his puzzled companions. Finally, he took his third and last grenade from his pack.

To the firing pin, which held down its safety lever, Max tied the end of a vine. He tied another vine round the grenade itself and with this he swung it down into position, but he firmly hung on to the vine which was tied to the firing pin. All the other vines he let fall into the river.

Hutch suddenly guessed his purpose.

By pulling on the vine, on the third grenade, he would explode it by jerking out its firing pin. This, in turn, would explode the two other grenades. The force of the three exploding grenades would blow apart the piled logs, far below.

Before Hutch could say anything, Max rapped an order.

"Jump to it, you chaps. Over with every log, tree-trunk and chunk of floating debris you can heave over the edge."

The urgency in his tone quietened Hutch's burning desire to ask his plan. Instead, following Max's powerful efforts and example, he raced to carry out the command.

Over they went—logs, trunks of fallen trees, branches . . . anything that would float. Pausing to wipe his perspiring brow, Hutch glanced into the gorge below. What he saw brought a sudden yell of excitement to his lips.

For the mass of debris had piled up until, now, it was forming a growing wall across the racing waters of the river. Into this wall was heaping debris from upstream. Rapidly, it was becoming a dam across the narrow channel.

Leakages were roaring through . . . but the pile of timber was forcing a swift build-up of water against this crudely-made dam. And as the three peered down at it they saw the river piling up like a fast-rising tide behind the dam.

Swiftly the water rose and with its rising it brought more and more debris thundering on top of the pile already there.

"Gosh!" Hutch gasped, wide-eyed. "If the river climbs much more it will be right up the walls of the gorge."

Logs were locked in what was now a solid barrier from side to side of the narrow channel. Max spun round, casting a rapid glance at the trees nearby. Hutch saw him about to step towards the tallest of them.

"Hang on to this end of the liana vine, Hutch," Max rapped, handing it to him. "The other end is triggering the grenade, down there in the bottom of the log dam."

Hutch snatched at the vine and Max swiftly shinned up the tree until he straddled its topmost bough. Shading his eyes against the morning sun, he stared downstream.

From his high perch he could clearly see the loaded barges riding peacefully at anchor far down the river. But he scarcely gave them a glance. What he had just seen sent him speeding back to the ground.

"Japs!"

Before he could repeat his yell of warning, from the trees burst a squad of Japanese jungle-fighting infantrymen. As they sighted the two white men and Ah Wong, shrill orders were shrieked in high-pitched Japanese. In a flash, the soldiers had taken cover behind trees and rocks.

A burst of fire roared from the Jap guns. Hutch, clutching the end of the vine, let out a gasp of pain. Max spun round. A flake of rock, chipped by a

bullet, had snicked Hutch's knuckles like a rod of hot iron.

"The liana vine!—Don't let it go!" yelled Max.

Too late Hutch saw it slipping from his pain-numbed grasp. Max dived to save it; but the end of the vine slid over the edge. Max saw it drift down, hanging from the dam where its other end was still attached to the primed bomb.

Max smothered a groan of dismay. Now he could not jerk the vine and explode the grenade which, in its turn, would explode the two other bombs, bringing the dam down in a thundering flood of suddenly released water. And the range was far too great for him to explode the grenades by a shot from his revolver.

A Jap machine-gun clamoured into action. As he heard it, and its bullets whined overhead, a sudden gleam came into Max's eyes. Grimly, he was resolved to secure that Jap gun. He had a use for it. He hissed an order to Hutch.

From his pack Hutch slid a small cylinder of steel to Max. It was one of the fire bombs they had brought to destroy the warehouse and its store of rubber. Now Max had another plan for the fire bomb.

He waited for the machine-gun to roar again into action. Having exactly located it, he pulled the pin from the bomb. Leaping to one knee, he hurled it into the trees, then flattened.

Woo-oomph!!

The fire bomb exploded amid the leafy branches. In a moment the tree was a mass of flame which fell like rain to the ground below. Yells of terror roared from the other side of the tree, and the machine-gun fell silent.

In a flash Max was sprinting to the tree, ignoring the falling burning branches and leaves. His revolver roaring, he dived round the tree and leapt for the machine-gun. The Japanese machine-gunners, stunned into bewildered terror by the fire from over their heads, turned and staggered away in dazed fear.

Snatching up the gun, Max roared to Hutch to cover him. Then, moving like a flash, he raced to the edge of the gorge. In an instant he had sighted the gun and was thumbing the trigger.

Brrrtt—brrtt—brrtt!

A stuttering chatter thundered across the gorge, filling it with the roar of its fire. Max, pointing the gun downward, was directing the stream of bullets at the interlocked mass of logs and tree-trunks.

"Look out, Max," Hutch yelled.

Max darted a glance over his shoulder. Racing from the trees was another squad of Japanese soldiers. Max spun the gun on its legs and hurled a spatter of bullets at them. They took cover, and, while Hutch kept them at bay, Max fired again at the dam.

Next moment, with a thunderous explosion, the dam was hurled high into the air. Max gave a cheer of excitement. His trick had succeeded. He had sent a bullet into one of the grenades, and all three bombs had blown up.

The dam crashed in a thousand fragments, and in a flash was swept away as tons of released flood water hurled downstream. In a mighty wall of water it surged out of sight. As it did so, Max spun the gun.

But the shock of the explosion had done more than smash the dam. It had torn away the walls of the channel. As Max turned, he was in time to see a mass of cliff vanish, carrying with it the Japanese who had taken cover there.

In a moment Max was again shinning up the high tree. Below, Hutch and Ah Wong heard him yell with excitement.

The huge wall of water was sweeping on to the anchored steel barges. As Max watched, he saw the pounding flood hurl solidly over the barges, tons of water pouring into their open tops. Like stones, one after another the barges sank.

As they vanished, their cargoes were washed away, carried downstream by the roaring flood-water. In a brief while what remained of the cargoes would be far out to sea, swept there by the raging mass of released water.

"We've done it!" Max jubilantly cried, dropping back to the ground. "Come on, chaps, let's beat it back to the coast, where the landing craft is hidden, waiting to take us out of Malaya. We've accomplished our mission."

"Good show," Hutch chuckled, and Ah Wong nodded happily as they fell into file behind their leader, Max Malone.

"Only one thing that didn't pan out as planned," Hutch thoughtfully murmured, "was that we were going to destroy the Jap rubber store by fire."

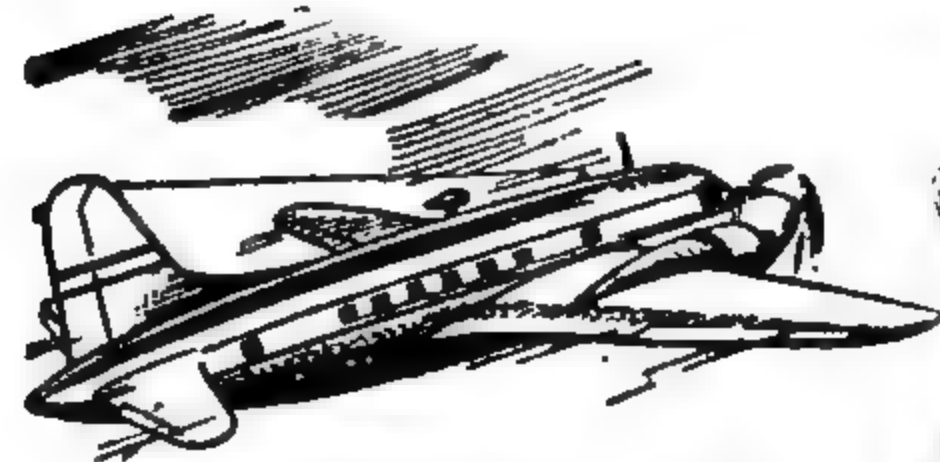
"And, instead, we did so by water," Max grinned.

And the three sped onward, cheered by the success of their daring mission.

THE END

WORLD-WIDE QUIZ

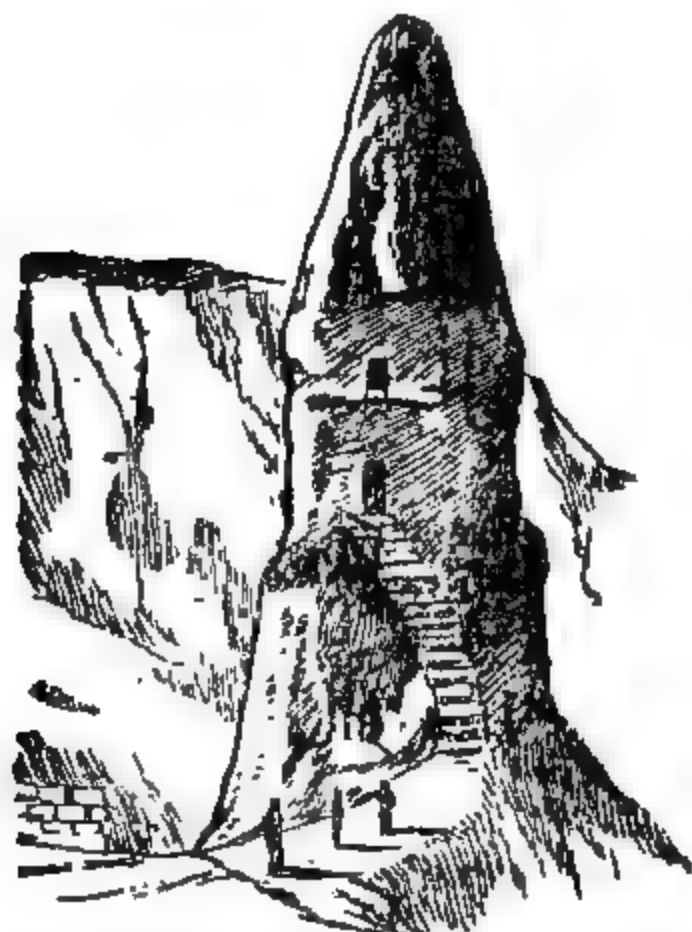
Have a Shot at the Answers—Then Check Them
with the Correct Ones on Page 126



2. NAME THE AEROPANE ("A" IS A
CLUE)



4. A FAMILIAR
OBJECT FROM AN
UNUSUAL ANGLE. IT'S—?



5. WHERE ARE THERE STOREHOUSES
LIKE THESE?



7. WHAT IS HIS TYPE OF
HAT CALLED?



8. HE LIVES IN THE
SUDAN. WHY DOES
HE STAND LIKE THIS?



9. WHICH FAMOUS
AIRLINE HAS
THIS BADGE?



3. IS THERE REALLY SUCH A HUGE
FLOWER?



6. SPOT THE ARTIST'S
DELIBERATE MISTAKES?



1. IS THE GERMAN SAYING "GOOD
EVENING," "HALLO" OR "GOOD-BYE"?



11. WHAT ORDER HAVE THE SOLDIERS
JUST CARRIED OUT?



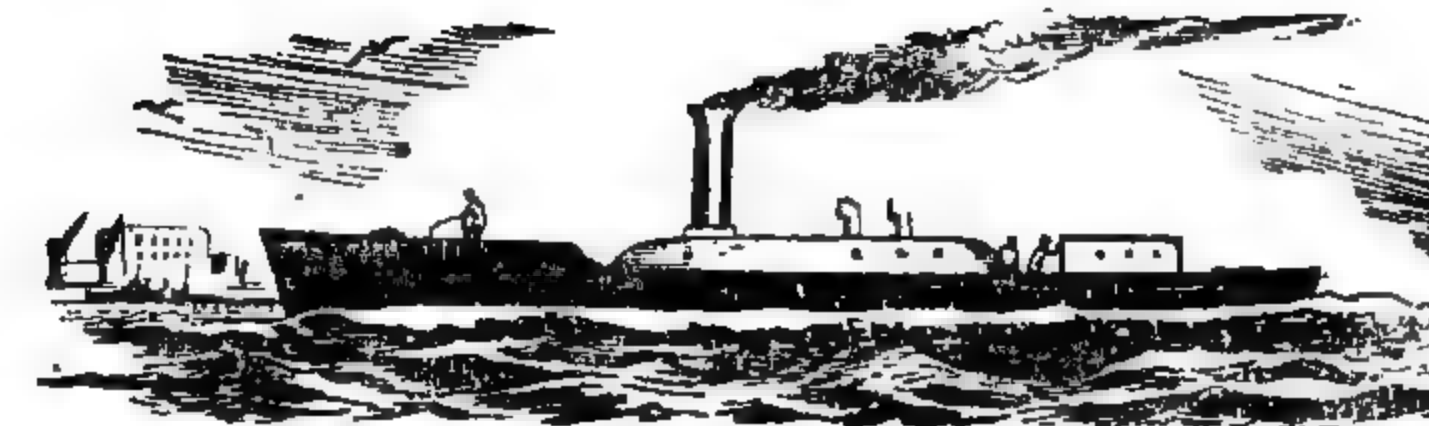
13. IS THE BOY'S INFORMATION CORRECT?



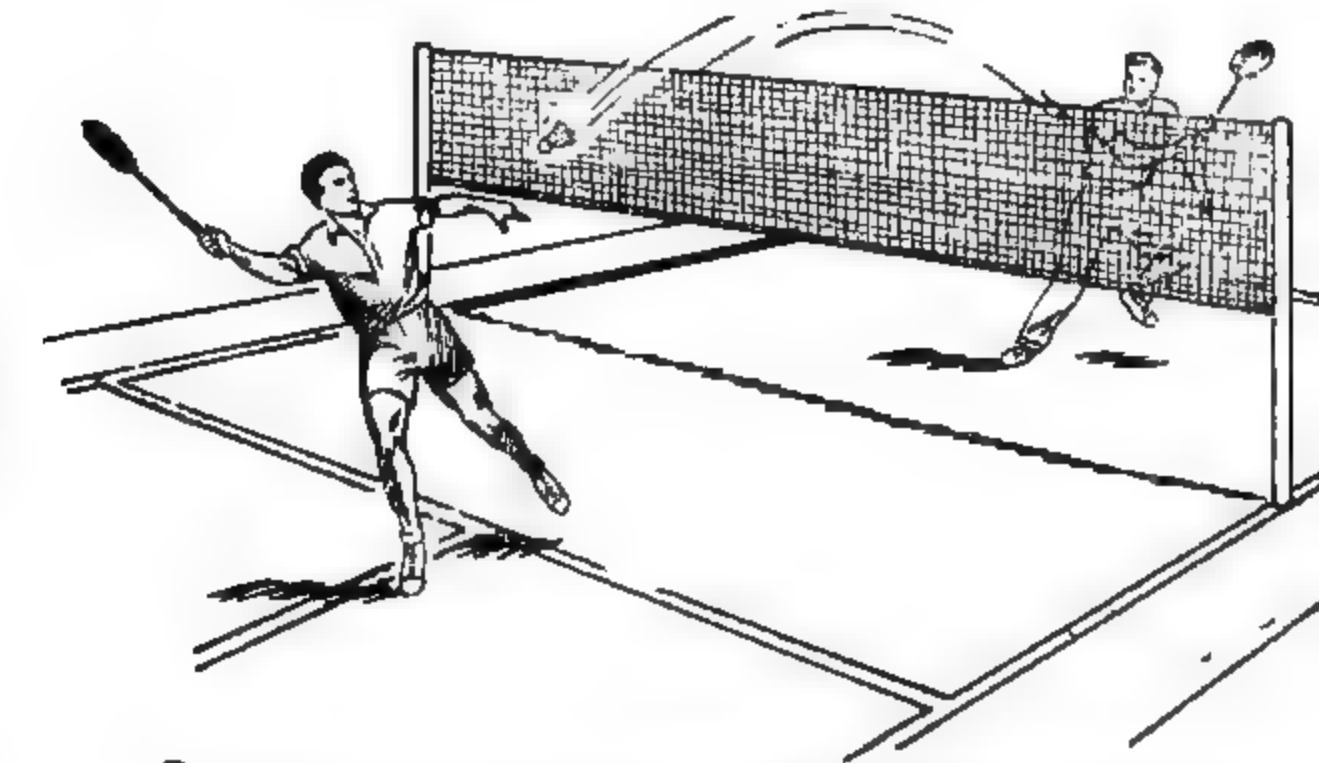
15. WHICH MUSICIAN IS PLAYING A BASS
CLARINET?



16. THE ARAB'S SELLING—WHAT?



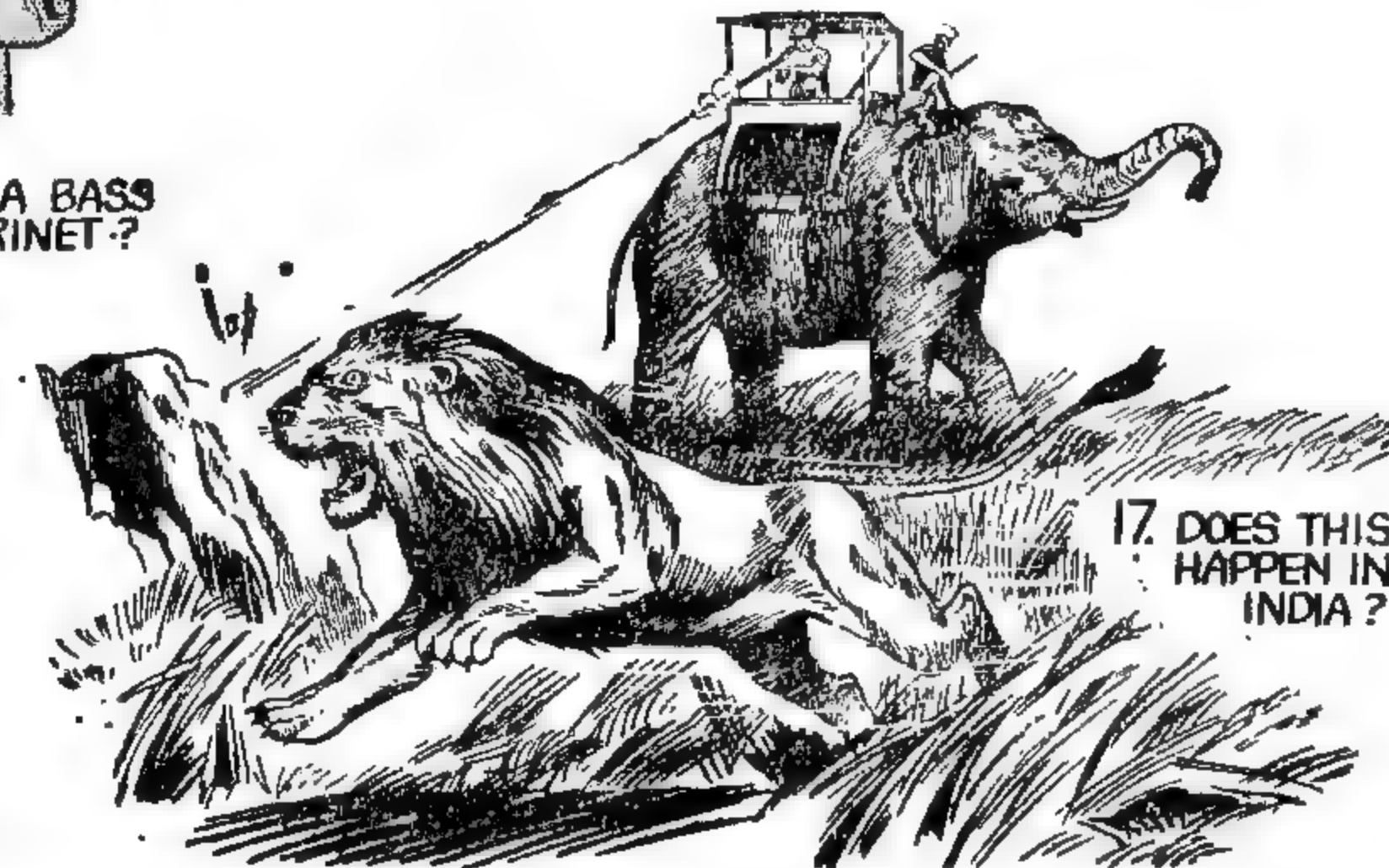
10. IS IT A PINNACE, A PINNACLE OR A PINION?



12. WHAT GLOUCESTERSHIRE TOWN DOES THIS
SUGGEST?



14. WHICH IS THE BINNACLE?



17. DOES THIS
HAPPEN IN
INDIA?

MARTIN VALE investigates—**ROBBERY** at the **RACECOURSE**

BY
E.R. HOME-GALL



PICKPOCKET AT WORK!

WHEN Flash Fenton, big-time jewel-thief, bought himself a stick of shaving-soap he also bought himself a long spell in prison.

You see, I am a private detective, and I knew that he always used an electric razor!

I'll tell you how it happened.

I own a bungalow on a peaceful little island in the River Thames. I call it the "Retreat." We were spending a few days there. "We," I should explain, consisted of myself—"Plug" Barlow, my assistant and self-appointed bodyguard—and "Nosy," my bulldog.

One day Nosy and I were sun-bathing on our veranda when a launch went tearing by at full speed.

I looked up, frowning, knowing that the launch's wash was going to set my dinghy dancing at its moorings, knocking off quite a lot of paint against my landing-stage.

Then I recognised the man at the launch's helm as Flash Fenton!

Fenton was a notorious crook—though it was some years since the police had been able to pin anything on him. But that wasn't to say that he'd spent those years innocently—merely that he'd never been caught!

Yes, he certainly seemed to have been making crime pay! And now, by the look of it, he was off to Winbridge Races to spend some of his ill-gotten wealth.

Winbridge Racecourse is just a few miles up-river from my bungalow, right opposite the old-world riverside town of Beaton-on-Thames. I had been toying with the idea of going up there myself and watching a few races, for the annual Summer Meeting had just started.

Now my mind was made up. I would spend the afternoon at Winbridge, not so much to watch the races as to keep an eye upon Flash Fenton.

I wondered what he was up to. Flash preferred London's underworld to fresh air and sunshine, and when he gambled it was always on "certainties"—which are never to be found upon a racecourse.

"Plug!" I yelled. "Racing togs, binoculars—and money! I'm going to the Races."

"That's a mug's lark," was the gruff reply.

"Flash Fenton is supporting the Sport of Kings!" I shouted.

"Oh, that's different!" called back Plug. "Then you'll need a gun, too!"

A short while later, I was aboard the Watersprite, my powerful, little speedboat, and on my way to Winbridge.

Contrary to Plug's advice I had left both my gun and him at home! Before my afternoon's racing was over I was going to wish that I had both!

I moored Watersprite close to the racecourse ferries, and about fifty yards from where Flash Fenton had tied-up his dapper launch.

It didn't take me long, after the turnstiles had

The Riddle of the Stolen Ruby that "Swam" Across a River!

clicked to admit me to the "Silver Ring" enclosure, to pick up Flash. He was quite alone. I was half-expecting to see him meet someone; but he didn't greet anybody even by so much as a nod of his head.

"Strange!" I muttered. "This makes me think that Flash is up to something—and hasn't come here just to watch horse racing!"

I had recognised other shady customers in the crowd whom I knew that Flash knew. But he had walked straight past several of them without so much as batting an eyelid.

Flash watched two races—and so I did, too. The third race is always the big race of a meeting, but Flash wasn't, apparently, interested in it. I trailed him. At first I thought he was going off for a drink.

But that wasn't the case.

To put you in the picture, I'd better explain that at Winbridge Racecourse the refreshment bar is under the back of the Grandstand. Between the bar and the river bank there's a fifty yard stretch of ankle deep grass—people often sit there on summer afternoons and gaze across at the riverside gardens of Beaton-on-Thames, on the other side of the river.

And that's just where Flash Fenton planted himself—all alone on the bank of the river, with his back to the racecourse, as if solitude and scenery meant more to him than racing!

"That isn't true to character!" I mused. "What's his little game?"

And then it happened. There was a sudden commotion in the crowd struggling to buy cups of tea around the tea-urn section of the Refreshment bar.

A well-dressed, middle-aged man was fighting his way from the counter holding a cup of tea in one hand, and trying, with the other, to defend it from the surging crowd.

A thuggish fellow wormed through the crowd past him. One of the thug's hands passed momentarily over the top of the man's cup—and, although I had no cause to suspect it at the time, dropped a drug-capsule into the tea.

The middle-aged man, getting clear of the crowd, took one deep drink from his cup, and then sagged down to the ground in an unconscious heap—scattering the contents of the cup in all directions.

Instantly a small crowd surged around him—some of them genuine race-goers, others members of the thug's gang. A shout went up for First Aid men, and a doctor.

I had squatted down in the grass, and had been pretending to study my race-card, whilst keeping a sharp eye on Flash. He was some thirty yards from me. I shot a swift, suspicious glance towards him, before rising to go to the man's aid.

But Flash Fenton was still sitting, facing the river,

with his back towards the race-course—as if totally unaware of the commotion behind him.

And then, as I started rising to my feet, I looked back towards the stricken man—and I saw something happen which I am sure no one upon that race-course could have seen but me.

Through a forest of legs I saw a man kneeling beside the stricken man. I saw his hand steal inside the unconscious man's coat, and then re-appear again, grasping a small oil-skin bag.

It was done with the speed of an expert pick-pocket—and with the sleight-of-hand skill of a conjurer!

I didn't take my eye off that small bag for a split-second.

Standing close to the kneeling man, bending forward, there was another man. He was holding a small terrier between his feet.

The pickpocket's hand flashed towards the dog. The terrier closed its teeth on the oilskin bag.

The next moment the terrier was speeding away from the crowd, through the long grass—heading straight for Flash Fenton.

The timing was perfect. No one in the crowd around the unconscious man had any eyes to spare for the cleverly trained terrier—as it romped past Flash, dropping the bag in the long grass at his side.

From the corner of my eye I saw a police-inspector emerging around a far corner of the Grandstand.

"It's robbery!" I yelled. "Get that man! He's Flash Fenton!"

Pointing at Flash I bounded off in his direction—expecting to see him make a dash for it, with the little bag now in his pocket.

But, instead of that, Flash remained seated in the long grass, a few feet from the bank of the river—motionless, and unperturbed.

And six thugs—typical members of a racecourse gang—who had been lurking upon the outskirts of the crowd, fanned suddenly out, to block my way to Flash Fenton.

Some slid coshes from their sleeves; others brought clenched fists from their side-pockets—fists adorned with gleaming knuckle-dusters.

"Get him!" hissed one of them, aiming a murderous blow at my head with his cosh.

I had fallen foul of the "cover gang" of a carefully-planned robbery!

THE SHAVING-SOAP CLUE

I AM pretty useful with my fists—a private detective who wants to stay alive has got to be. Also I know quite a lot of judo.

I dodged the descending cosh, and crashed my fist home into the thug's jaw. At the same moment I kicked another gangster's feet from beneath him.

Before the other four closed upon me I had just

time to shoot one more glance in Flash Fenton's direction.

He was still seated calmly on the river bank with not a soul within twenty yards of him—no confederate to whom he could have passed the stolen packet. Then the oilskin bag must be still in his pocket!

I saw a faint movement in the long grass at his side. But it was only a startled water-rat—making a bolt for the river.

I hadn't time to give it a thought. The four thugs had now closed in upon me. I hadn't a hope against such odds. But help was at hand.

A police whistle shrilled nearby.

The inspector, policemen, and plain-clothes men were racing to my rescue. But these racecourse gangs can work swiftly—and they fight to no rules.

My hair was grasped from behind, and my head jerked back. Almost simultaneously a knuckle-duster flashed towards my up-jutting chin.

I lashed out with my foot as hard as I could. There was a low shout of pain—and the knuckle-duster swerved in its course just sufficiently to miss my face.

But it caught me a glancing blow on the side of the temple. Stars blazed before my eyes—and I went down.

I wasn't k.o.'d completely—but by the time my thoughts had beaten their way through throbbing pain the police-inspector was bending over me.

The thugs who had attacked me had melted away. Racecourse gangs are well practised in that art. They had scattered into the rapidly growing crowd—and were now probably watching the arrival of the police, as interested spectators.

I looked round, dazed.

To my amazement I saw Flash Fenton still sitting by the river—remotely disconnecting himself from all these startling happenings.

Plain-clothes detectives, who had been on normal racecourse duty, had now cleared a space around the drugged man. The Inspector was looking down at me with recognition in his eyes.

"Martin Vale!" he gasped. "What are you—?"

"I'll explain later!" I interrupted. "I saw the whole thing! Get that man on the bank! It's Flash Fenton—and he's got the 'goods' on him! A small bag that was stolen from this unconscious fellow's pocket!"

Flash rose sullenly to his feet as we approached.

"What's all this about?" he demanded truculently. "More persecution by the police—just because I've got a prison record. Well, search me then!"

The police did. And found nothing! They searched the long grass all around where Flash Fenton had been sitting. And still found nothing!

We were driven off in a police van, across the

river to Beaton-on-Thames' little police station. I told all that I had seen—interrupted by scornful laughs from Flash. He was searched again, more thoroughly—and again no sign or trace of the little oilskin bag was found.

Following the usual police procedure, Flash was asked if he would care to volunteer a statement.

"A statement—about what?" he scoffed. "About a nosy 'private eye' who's invented this whole cock-an'-bull story, hoping to get me jailed?"

It was decided that, before Flash was released, a detective should search his launch. I asked to go along with the detective, although I didn't expect the search to bear any fruit.

It was a well-appointed luxury launch. I noted that it could be plugged-in for electric power to any moorings equipped for this purpose. Apart from lighting, Flash had installed a radiogram, television, an electric clock, and the electric razor that was later to prove a vital clue!

We went back, empty-handed, to the police-station. I wasn't too popular there. I could see that even the police were now beginning to doubt my story. Flash was still complaining about "police persecution," and as they hadn't a shred of evidence to pin upon him, they would have to let him go.

"Hold him for just two minutes after I've left!" I whispered to the chief detective-inspector.

Glared at by Flash, I left the police-station. Finding a deserted builder's yard, I dodged behind a pile of timber, and ripped off my blazer.

I turned it inside out, and put it on again—and the blazer had become a tweed sports coat. Pull-over and tie were reversible, too. The pullover changed from white to blue and the tie became a cravat.

When I'm out on a job I always carry a small kit of theatrical make-up with me—so it didn't take me long to acquire a heavy tan and a bushy moustache that covered half my face!

Two minutes later I was strolling past the front of the police-station, looking like a farmer having a day at the races.

Soon Flash emerged. He walked straight to the end of the street. Then he paused and looked round—as if to make sure he wasn't being shadowed by anyone from the police-station.

But he and I had the street to ourselves—and he didn't give me as much as a second glance.

I trailed him for the next twenty minutes, all round Beaton—making sure he didn't see me.

He made his way at length down a road which ran parallel to the river, and then turned suddenly into a chemist's shop, Walter Smeel and Son. The shop's back garden ran down to the river—right

opposite to the spot on the other bank where Flash Fenton had seated himself that afternoon.

I strolled in after Flash. An assistant came along to ask my requirements, whilst Flash was being served by the chemist himself, a little rat-faced man, a short distance along the counter.

When I heard what Flash was buying I pricked up my ears.

"I want a stick of Smoothshave shaving-soap!" he said.

And Flash used an electric-razor! I saw the chemist pick up a stick of shaving-soap that was standing all by itself on a shelf in a glass case behind the counter. His assistant was looking enquiringly at me.

"I want some shaving-soap!" I said. "I think I'll try Smoothshave!"

A few moments later the chemist and his assistant were wrapping up our two purchases into almost identical packages.

I took my purchase from the assistant and paid for it. Then, as I turned towards the door, I bumped into a small table, sending its contents scattering all over the floor. It looked like an accident—but it wasn't!

Of course I apologised, covered with confusion, and whilst Flash, the chemist and his assistant were looking round at the scattered goods, I quickly switched my packet of Smoothshave shaving-soap with the one which the chemist had wrapped for Flash, and had placed on the counter.

A few seconds later Flash put the packet into his pocket and left the shop. I stayed behind to help the chemist straighten up the disorder I had caused. But I didn't mind losing touch with Flash now—for I felt pretty certain that the stick of shaving-soap would supply some clue that would bring us together again.

I returned to my bungalow down the river, and there I unwrapped Flash's shaving-soap. At first there appeared to be nothing unusual about it, and no secret message wrapped up with it—for by now I was convinced that Flash and Walter Smeel, the chemist, were in league.

And then, just as I was about to conclude that I had drawn a blank, I noticed

something strange about the stick of shaving-soap.

There was a barely-visible straight line down the soap from its holder to its tip! It told me that the soap had been cut down the middle with a sharp knife, and then welded together again.

Gripping the stick in both hands I broke it in half.

The next moment my eyes almost leapt out of my head.

A magnificent, flawless red ruby had fallen from out of the shaving-soap and on to the table in front of me! . . .

A DOUBLE BLUFF

"IT all boils down to this, eh, Plug." I said, some twenty minutes later. "I've got a valuable stolen jewel, but I can't prove a thing against Flash Fenton—yet. That is a state of affairs which has got to be changed!"

Plug, who is an ardent reader of "Police Gazette," and rivals Scotland Yard in knowledge of the goings-on in the "world of crime," had supplied me with the information that the ruby now in my possession was one of five from the famous Bhara Tiara which had been stolen some two months ago.

Some denizen of the underworld—possibly Flash Fenton—still had the other four. And those rubies were worth £10,000 each!

"It beats me, Chief," said Plug, scratching his head. "You suggest that the man from whom that



Desperately I hacked with my knife at the tough rope which bound the block of salt to my legs. Unless I could swiftly cut through them I was doomed.

jewel was stolen was a member of the gang—probably someone who was doing a double-cross. But how did they get it across the river to the chemist's shop so quickly?"

"That's easy, Plug," I said. The answer is—a rat! And by a rat I don't mean Flash Fenton, but a real one. A water rat! But that can wait. At the moment, what I've got to do is get in touch with Flash again."

I mused for a while—and then I had an idea.

"For two shillings, I bought an article worth £10,000, Plug!" I said. "The only thing that an honest citizen can do is to take it back!"

"What?" gasped Plug. "Are you crazy?"

"No—I've got a plan!" I answered. "A plan to trap Fenton and his gang."

I reached the chemist's shop some twenty minutes later—just before it closed for the day. Now I wasn't disguised, and so Walter Smeel didn't know me. When I told him that I wanted a word in private he said he was too busy.

"It's about a certain stick of Smoothshave shaving-soap!" I said.

He gave me a quick look, and showed me into a back room. When I produced the shaving-stick and showed him the ruby he almost fainted.

"Quite a valuable shaving-stick, isn't it?" I said.

"Who are you—the police?" he gasped, hoarsely.

"Oh, no!" I answered. "Just a freelance unconnected with any public body. I have come here solely for my own satisfaction!"

A look of immense relief came over the chemist's face.

"You mean, you've muscled in on our racket to get money out of us!" he said. "Have you got a price fixed in your mind?"

I nodded. Of course I didn't tell him that my price was his and Flash Fenton's freedom.

"What man hasn't?" I answered. "Are you going to talk turkey—or must I see Flash Fenton?"

Walter Smeel thought deeply. I saw him glance towards the telephone. That was what I wanted—him to 'phone up Flash, and me hear the number. Telephone numbers can be easily traced! But the chemist was cunning.

"I'll 'phone Flash later!" he said. "Very smart, the way you got hold of that ruby; I like smart fellows. We'll have a little talk first—over a friendly drink!"

I grinned inwardly. Walter Smeel might just as well have said in as many words: "Before I 'phone Flash, I'll dope you!"

He went outside, and then returned with the two drinks—and from the way that he carefully kept the two glasses apart I needed no reassuring that my drink was heavily doped.

There was a fern on a table at my elbow. I waited until his back was turned and then poured

my drink into it. When he looked round again I was just lowering my empty glass from my lips. He almost laughed aloud! So did I!

"That was good——!" I began.

Then I closed my eyes and flopped in my chair. My arms hung loosely to each side of it, and the ruby was still clasped in one fist.

Almost at once Walter Smeel went to the telephone and gave a number, which I carefully noted. I took the opportunity, whilst he wasn't looking towards me, of slipping my knife from my pocket. With it I cut a slit in the seat of my armchair, and pushed the ruby through it, into the horsehair stuffing.

"Hallo—that you, Flash?" the chemist was saying on the 'phone. "Smeel, here! There's nothing to worry about. I've got that private 'tec, Martin Vale here—doped! And he was mug enough to bring that ruby with him."

I heard Flash Fenton's voice come from the ear-piece.

"Good! Keep him there, whilst I fetch my launch across to your mooring. That meddlesome dick has learnt too much for our safety; the only place for him is the bottom of the river. And I know a way of putting him there, without leaving any traces of foul play!"

I played "doped" for about half-an-hour, and then Flash Fenton came into the room through a pair of french windows overlooking the lawn.

Meanwhile, Walter Smeel had been searching me vainly for the ruby, and growing more and more panic-stricken. Flash searched me too, but swiftly gave it up.

"Never mind the jewel now!" he said. "You saw him with it, and so it must be hidden somewhere in this room—we can find it later! Our first job is to dump him in the river so that when his body is found there'll be a verdict of "accidentally drowned"—with no traces of any violence!"

I wondered how he planned to do this—and was soon to find out. Between them they carried me out to the launch—and I don't mind telling you that I was all ready to start fighting for my life.

The launch was cast-off and allowed to drift towards mid-stream. Then I saw how Flash Fenton planned to dispose of me—and I stopped worrying.

It was an ingenious scheme, and would undoubtedly have worked well—if I had been really doped. Fenton produced two huge bars of block salt. There were half-circles cut in one side of each bar, so that they could be fitted over my ankles, like the village stocks of olden days.

The two bars of salt were roped to my legs. Then I was unceremoniously dumped overboard—to sink straight to the bottom, dragged down by the weight of the salt.

Gradually the bars of salt would dissolve in the water. The rope would fall away from them, and, at some time the next day, my lifeless body would drift to the surface with no evidence to prove foul play.

But that didn't fit in with my plans—at all. Just before going beneath the surface I drew in a deep breath. Almost before I reached the bottom of the river, about fourteen feet from the surface, I had my knife from my pocket, and was hacking at the rope around the blocks of salt.

But it was waxed rope, and tougher to cut than I had anticipated. By the time I was half-way through it my lungs were nearly bursting.

I began to think that Flash's plan was going to succeed—and mine fail!

Driven by desperation I redoubled my efforts. The extra energy set the blood pounding in my temples like sledge-hammers. Red-hot steel bands seemed to be encircling my chest. Could I do it? It started to look as if I couldn't!

And then the last rope parted, and the blocks of salt fell away from my feet. I shot desperately for the surface, reached it, and sucked down a sweet and glorious breath of life-giving air.

I was too nearly spent now to worry about what Flash was doing. It's nasty being in mid-river, and feeling you haven't the strength to reach either bank. I struck out doggedly for the racecourse bank.

Somehow I managed to gain my speedboat, still at the spot where I had moored it that afternoon. For fully three minutes I clung there, panting—then, at last, I was able to think about Flash Fenton again.

I saw that he had cruised his launch back to the chemist's mooring. Now it was quite dark, but the two crooks hadn't thought to draw the blinds across the french window of the room in which I had hidden the ruby.

As if they were upon a theatre stage, I could see Flash and Walter Smeel playing a sort of hunt-the-thimble—searching for the ruby.

Then, even as I watched, Flash found the jewel. I saw it flash in the light as he slipped it into his pocket. He said something to the chemist, and then came out through the french windows, heading for his launch.

"Oh, no, you don't, Flash!" I muttered. "I want that ruby—and you!"

I scrambled up into the speedboat, and started the powerful inboard-motor. By this time Flash was heading away down-river in his launch, at a speed that fanned out great ribs of waves.

But I knew that, however powerful his launch

might be, it couldn't out-speed Watersprite. Swerving sharply round from the bank I gave my speedboat full throttle. Soon we were overtaking the launch hand-over-fist—but the hum of its engine drowned the powerful purr of my speedy little motor. Watersprite bounded over bow-waves with the sleek grace of a racing greyhound.

Seconds later I was alongside the launch. I shut the boat's throttle, and took a flying leap into the cockpit of the launch.

I landed almost on top of Flash—as he turned round to face me with a startled shout. He was too surprised to put up much of a fight, and had no time to draw a gun. I gave him one under the chin which crumpled him up—and then another, as he went down, that put him out "cold."

Flash Fenton woke up in the police station—and by that time the detective-inspector and I had gone round to collect the chemist. At the cold touch of handcuffs around his wrists, Walter Smeel collapsed like a pricked balloon.

"But what beats me," said the inspector, "is how they got the ruby across here from the racecourse to the chemist's shop."

"I think I can explain that!" I said, leading him down to the river.

On the chemist's landing-stage I found the end of a long string, tied to a mooring-ring just beneath the surface of the river. We hauled the string in. It was long enough to span the river. At its other end was a model of a water-rat. It was hollow, with a zip-fastener down its furry back.

"Before the race meeting," I explained, "the string was laid across the river, kept out of sight by little weights, made probably of salt. Flash had the dummy rat in his pocket. The trained terrier took the ruby to him; he slipped the ruby into the dummy rat—which the chemist hauled across the river. It was a cunning scheme, because even though I happened to see the rat at the time, it didn't arouse my suspicions. After all, what could be more natural than a water-rat on the bank of a river?"

The chemist, a short while later, turned Queen's Evidence. During the week that followed, the whole gang was rounded up and the rest of the rubies recovered. It was as I had guessed. The man who had been drugged on the racecourse had been one of the gang. He had tried to keep one of the stolen rubies for himself, but the rest of the gang had been too clever for him.

So I received a big reward—all because I noted that Flash Fenton used an electric shaver!

JUNGLE JEF AND THE MENACE OF GRUM the GORILLA

BY
REX
KING

JEF HAD BEEN LOST IN THE AFRICAN JUNGLE WHEN A CHILD. HE HAD GROWN UP AMONG THE WILD ANIMALS, MANY OF WHOM WERE NOW HIS FRIENDS. WITH HIM IN HIS TREE-TOP HUT THERE LIVED TWO OF HIS PETS -- CHEEKO THE CHIMPANZEE AND BOKO THE PARROT. ONE DAY, JEF AND CHEEKO RETURNED HOME LADEN WITH FISH, FRUIT AND NUTS



AH! 'TIS GOOD TO BE BACK AGAIN. AND WE HAVE DONE WELL. THIS FOOD WILL LAST US MANY DAYS. LET US PUT IT IN STORE

CLEVER JEF! CLEVER JEF!

BUT WHILE JEF STOWED THE FOOD AWAY IN THE HUT, CHEEKO COULDN'T RESIST TRYING TO BREAK OPEN AN APPETISING COCONUT



SUDDENLY JEF TENSED, HIS EAR COCKED ALERTLY



HIST! THAT NOISE BELOW! SOMETHING'S HAPPENING IN THE JUNGLE. IT BODES ILL!

THEN FROM AMONG THE TREES THERE BURST A THROG OF TERRIFIED ANIMALS



A CREATURE WHICH HAD BEEN CHASING THEM CRASHED INTO VIEW

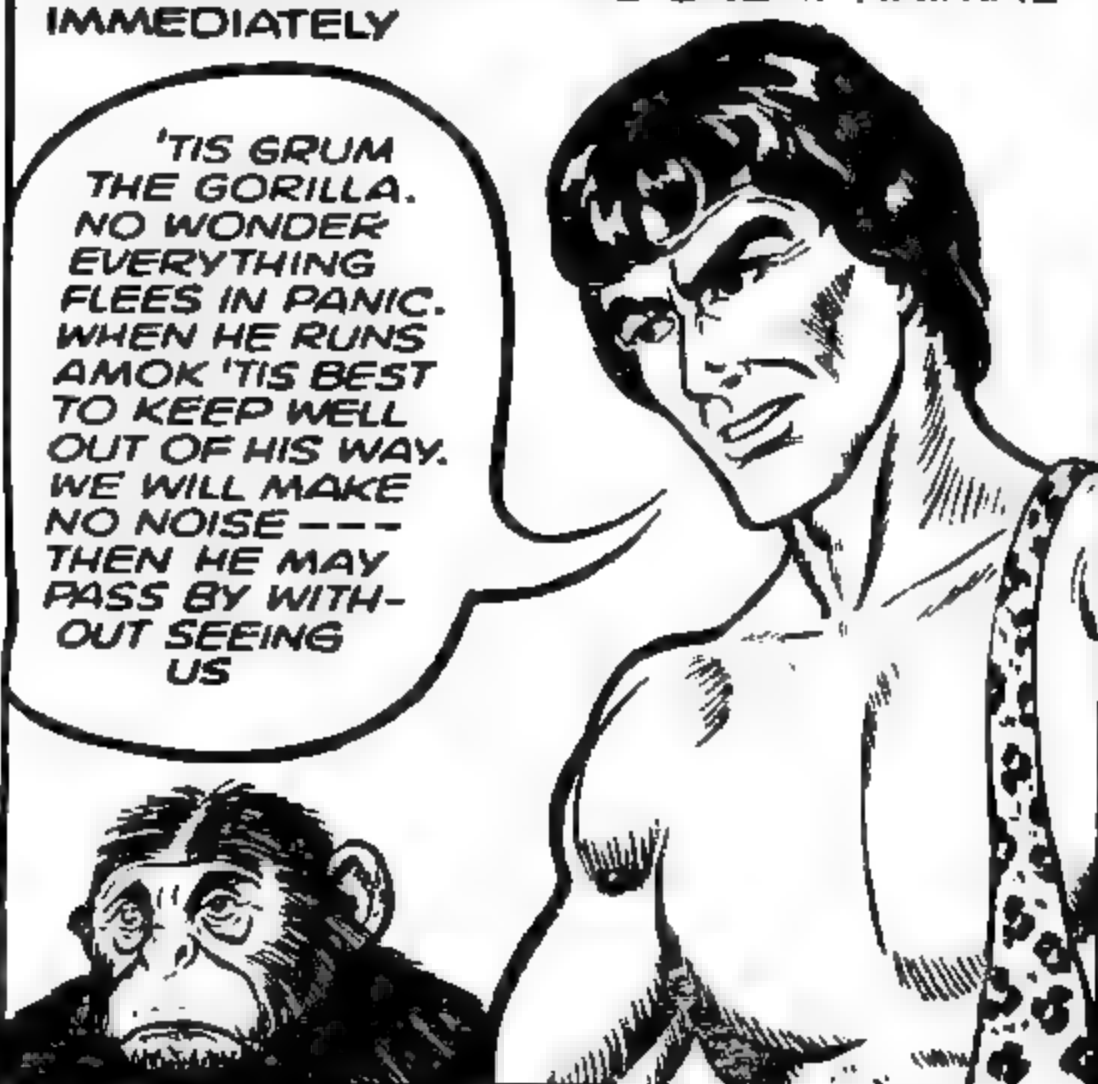


JEF RECOGNISED THE GREAT ANIMAL IMMEDIATELY

'TIS GRUM THE GORILLA. NO WONDER EVERYTHING FLEES IN PANIC. WHEN HE RUNS AMOK 'TIS BEST TO KEEP WELL OUT OF HIS WAY. WE WILL MAKE NO NOISE --- THEN HE MAY PASS BY WITHOUT SEEING US

TREMBLING WITH FEAR, CHEEKO CLUTCHED JEF BY THE HAND -- AND IN DOING SO DROPPED THE COCONUT

THE COCONUT HURTLIED DOWN --- AND CAUGHT THE GORILLA ON THE SHOULDER!



WITH A ROAR GRUM HALTED AND LOOKED UPWARDS. JEF GAVE A BASP

FOOLISH CHEEKO! THAT HAS MADE HIM MORE ANGRY THAN EVER

UTTERING SAVAGE SOUNDS OF RAGE, THE HUGE GORILLA BEGAN TO CLIMB UP TOWARDS THE TREE-HUT

LOOK OUT! LOOK OUT!



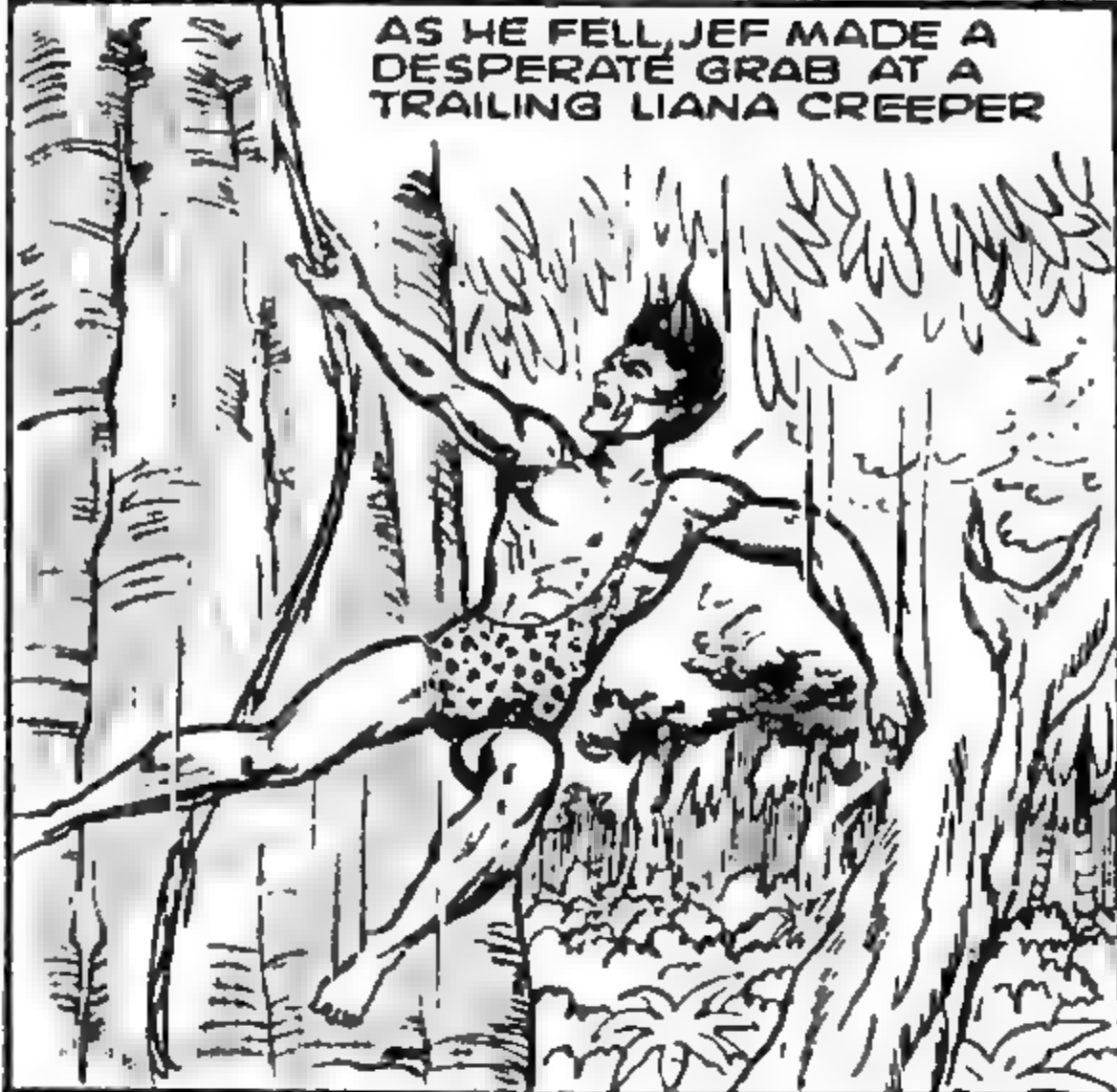
CHEEKO FLED IN TERROR TO AN UPPER BRANCH. BUT JEF STOOD HIS GROUND DEFIANTLY

STOP! GO BACK! GO BACK!

GRUM, HOWEVER, HIT OUT WITH ONE OF HIS MASSIVE FISTS. BEFORE JEF COULD DODGE ASIDE HE WAS KNOCKED FLYING!



AS HE FELL, JEF MADE A DESPERATE GRAB AT A TRAILING LIANA CREEPER



WIRY AND MUSCULAR FROM HIS LIFE IN THE JUNGLE, HE CLUNG TO THE LIANA AND SWUNG DOWN TO SAFETY. THE NEXT MOMENT HE WAS JOINED BY BOKO AND CHEEKO



MEANWHILE, GRUM WAS WREAKING HIS VENGEANCE ON THE TREE-TOP HUT



AGAINST SUCH A FORMIDABLE ANIMAL, JEF COULD DO NOTHING

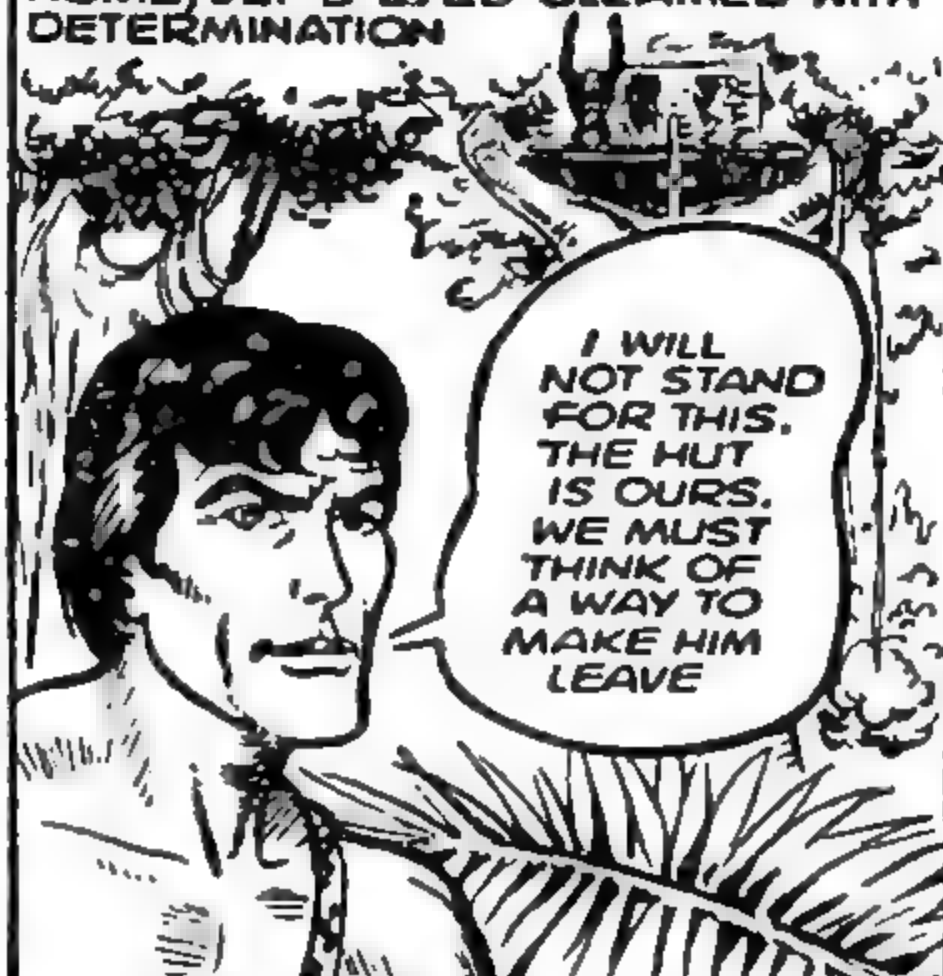
GRUM IS THE MOST FEARSOME BEAST IN THE JUNGLE. ALL WE CAN DO IS TO WAIT IN THE HOPE THAT HE WILL SOON RETURN TO THE FOREST WHERE HE LIVES



BUT INSTEAD OF COMING DOWN TO THE GROUND, THE GIANT GORILLA STAYED IN THE HUT-- AND HE WAS STILL THERE WHEN DARKNESS FELL. JEF AND HIS PETS HAD TO BE CONTENT TO SLEEP ON A BED OF LEAVES IN THE UNDERGROWTH



WHEN MORNING DAWNED, AND GRUM THE GORILLA WAS STILL IN POSSESSION OF THE TREE-TOP HOME, JEF'S EYES GLEAMED WITH DETERMINATION



THE JUNGLE LAD RACKED HIS BRAINS--THEN HE TURNED TO THE CHIMP

I KNOW WHAT WE WILL DO. COME, CHEEKO-- I NEED YOUR HELP



CARRYING A GOURD WHICH HAD BEEN HURLED DOWN BY THE GORILLA, JEF AND HIS PETS HURRIED TO SOME TREES WHICH WERE LADEN WITH PURPLE FRUIT

THESE ARE GRUM'S FAVOURITES WE WILL GATHER PLENTY



FIVE MINUTES LATER

WELL DONE, CHEEKO! NOW FOR THE NEXT PART OF MY PLAN



JEF LED THE WAY TO THE TREE UP WHICH HE HAD BUILT HIS HUT. GRUM WAS STILL THERE, AND, WITH A SMILE, THE JUNGLE LAD CALLED UP TO HIM

HO THERE, GRUM! SEE WHAT I HAVE HERE!



THE INSTANT THE GORILLA SAW THE FRUIT, HE CAME CLAMBERING DOWN WITH ALL SPEED



BUT BEFORE GRUM COULD REACH HIM, JEF TURNED ROUND AND BROKE INTO A RUN

COME, CHEEKO! FOLLOW ME!



TO HIS DELIGHT, THE GORILLA BEGAN TO GIVE CHASE

GRUM FOLLOWS! MY PLAN TO GET RID OF HIM IS WORKING!





A TREE-TRUNK FORMED A BRIDGE OVER THE CHASM, AND SWIFTLY JEF AND THE CHIMP STARTED TO CROSS IT



CHEEKO GAVE A SHRILL CRY OF TERROR



AND IN HIS HASTE TO SCRAMBLE BACK, THE CHIMP SLIPPED AND FELL FROM THE LOG!



TO JEF'S RELIEF CHEEKO GRASPED AT A BUSH AND HUNG ON TO IT DESPERATELY



THE SNAKE, HOWEVER, SAW THAT CHEEKO WAS AT ITS MERCY. INCH BY INCH IT STRETCHED DOWNWARDS



ALTHOUGH THE GORILLA WAS NOT FAR DISTANT, JEF DASHED BACK ACROSS THE TREE-TRUNK

POOR CHEEKO IS DOOMED UNLESS I CAN GET RID OF THE SNAKE



THE JUNGLE LAD PUT DOWN THE GOURD OF FRUIT, THEN SEIZED THE TREE-TRUNK AND HEAVED WITH ALL HIS MIGHT



IN THE NICK OF TIME THE LOG WAS SENT TUMBLING INTO THE CHASM, TAKING THE GIANT SNAKE WITH IT



AWK! AWK! CLEVER JEF! CLEVER JEF!

JEF RIPPED DOWN A HANGING LIANA CREEPER, AND FLUNG ONE END TO THE CHIMP



QUICK, CHEEKO! CATCH!

A MINUTE LATER THE CHATTERING CHIMP WAS BEING PULLED TO SAFETY



MEANWHILE, THE GIANT FIGURE OF THE GORILLA WAS CRASHING THROUGH THE UNDERGROWTH TOWARDS THEM



JEF HEARD THE NOISE JUST AS THE CHIMP REACHED THE TOP OF THE CHASM

GRUM IS COMING! BUT NOW THAT THE LOG HAS GONE, I MUST THINK OF ANOTHER PLAN TO GET HIM AWAY FROM US SO THAT WE MAY LIVE IN OUR HUT IN PEACE



ALL AT ONCE HE NOTICED
THAT CHEEKO WAS STILL
HOLDING THE CREEPER



EAGERLY JEF
SPRANG INTO
ACTION

YOU HAVE
GIVEN ME AN IDEA,
CHEEKO! HURRY!
THE LIANA. WE
MUST MAKE
HASTE!



TAKING THE CREEPER WITH
HIM, HE SPRANG INTO
A NEARBY TREE



WITHIN A FEW SECONDS THE
JUNGLE LAD HAD FASTENED
SEVERAL STRONG CREEPERS
TO A TREE-BRANCH WHICH
OVERHUNG THE CHASM. FROM
THEM HE SUSPENDED THE
GOURD OF FRUIT. THEN, TENSE
WITH EXCITEMENT, JEF WAITED



AND THEN THE HUGE GORILLA
BURST INTO VIEW



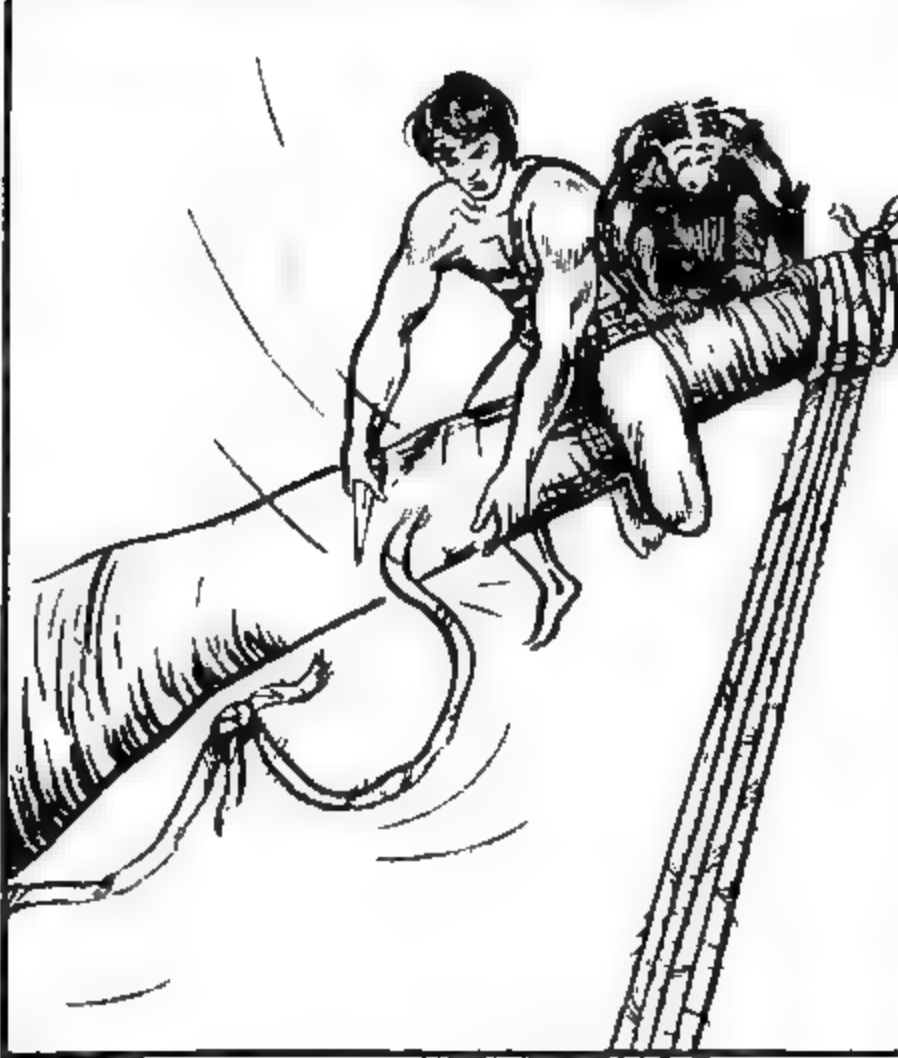
THE INSTANT GRUM SIGHTED THE FRUIT HE
LUMBERED FORWARD, HIS ARMS OUT-
STRETCHED GREEDILY. AND UP ABOVE, JEF
WAS READY WITH HIS HOME-MADE KNIFE!



THE GORILLA LEAPT UP AND SEIZED THE GOURD OF FRUIT



IN A FLASH JEF SLASHED AT ONE END OF THE LIANA ROPE!



AS A RESULT GRUM SWUNG OUT OVER THE CHASM LIKE A PENDULUM!



WHEN GRUM WAS OVER THE FAR BANK, JEF CUT THE OTHER ROPES



GRUM LANDED WITH THE GOURD OF FRUIT STILL IN HIS GRASP--AND JEF UTTERED A YELL OF TRIUMPH



THE GORILLA SOON REALISED THAT HE HAD BEEN TRICKED--THAT THE CHASM NOW CUT HIM OFF FROM JEF'S TREE-TOP HOME. BUT AS THE GULF EXTENDED FOR MILES, JEF KNEW THAT GRUM WOULD BE FAR TOO LAZY TO WALK ALL THE WAY ROUND THE END OF IT



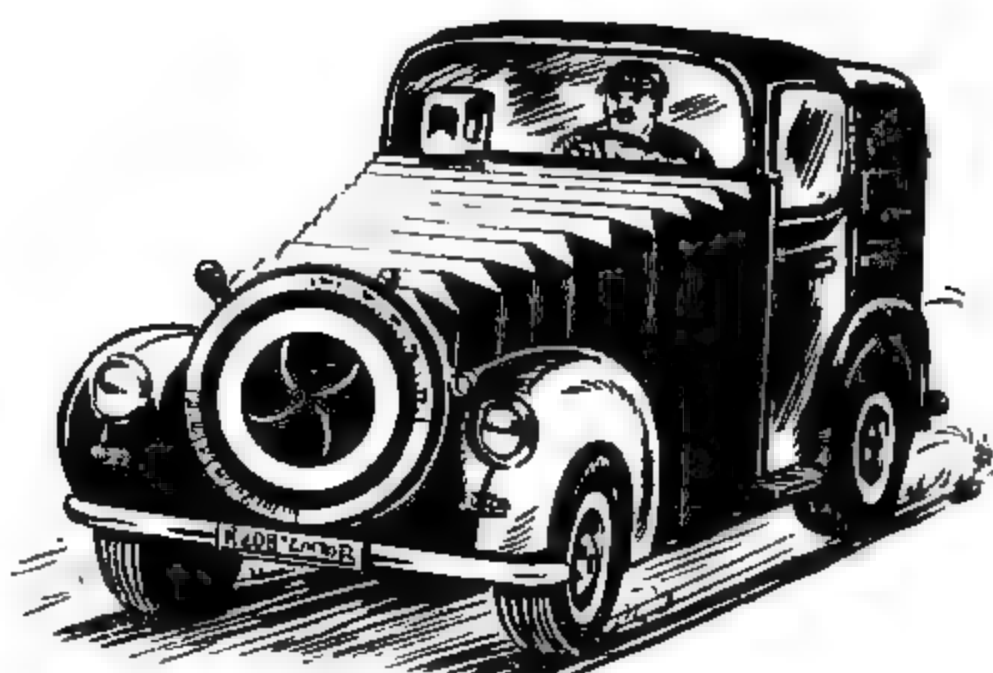
BACK AT THEIR HUT, JEF AND HIS PETS WERE SOON THOROUGHLY ENJOYING A FEAST OF BANANAS, NUTS AND BREADFRUIT, WASHED DOWN BY DELICIOUS COCONUT MILK



PICTURE PARADE of



It's no wonder passers-by stop and stare at this "tree house" at Berne, in Switzerland. Given permission to build his home at this spot, the owner was told not to cut the tree down. His ingenious, if draughty, way out was to build the house around it.



There's no need to call "watch the birdie" when this camera-like contraption cruises by. All eyes are on it. And that's just what the makers want. For it is an eye-catching publicity stunt dreamed up by a go-ahead camera firm.



No, it's not a man from Mars, nor a heap of old inner tubes. It's a rubber worker's answer to the atom bomb! He believes it would protect him from blast and radiation if one of the bombs were to fail. And it would need to. For in that weighty outfit he would have a tough job running away!

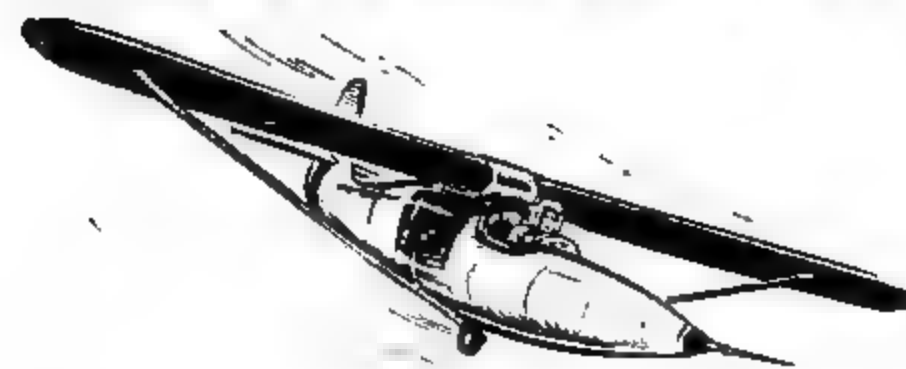


Forty feet up and still soaring! The sky's the limit for water skier Doug Levarsha when he takes his kite to sea. Towed at 30 m.p.h. behind a motor-boat, he is whisked away into the air. So far he has reached a height of 100 feet, but a change in the wind could mean a quick ducking.



(Above).—In Japan they say 10-year-old Noriko Uemitsu has a new angle on art, and that's not surprising, because she draws by holding the chalks between her toes, or in her teeth! Why the contortions? Because she finds it easier that way!

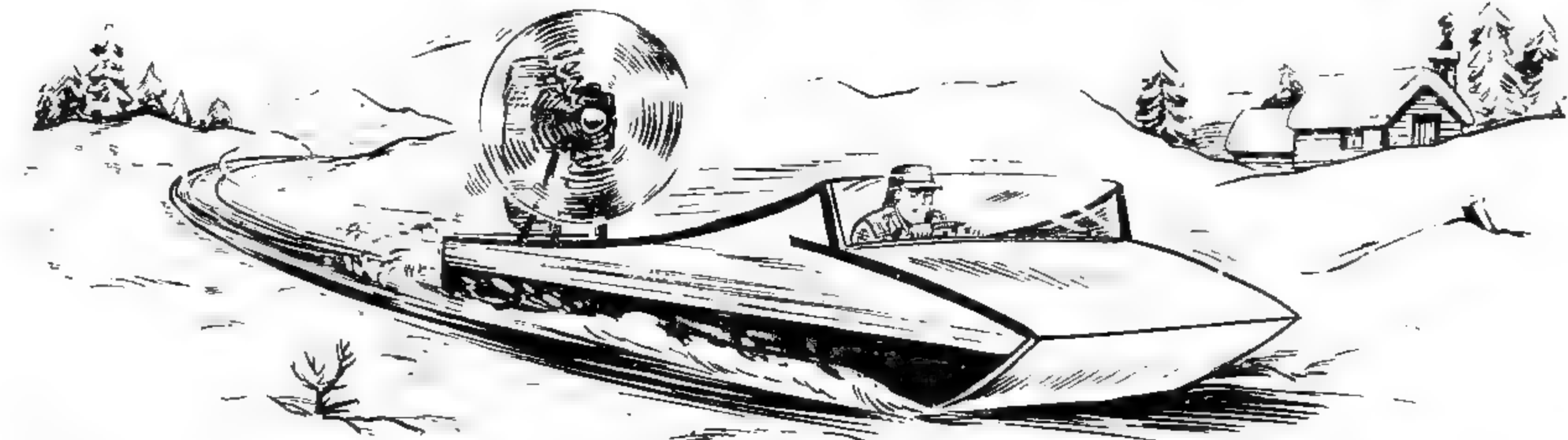
FACTS FROM NEAR AND FAR



(Left).—Here's a daring display of aerial archery, as the needle-nosed glider of ace Californian pilot, Don Stevens, arrows towards the tiny target held by a couple of helpers. Don, who ferried infantrymen into battle during World War II, very seldom misses his mark.



(Right).—Precarious pedaller Tony Ramano makes things even more difficult for himself when he takes aboard a couple of passengers while riding this baby bike. It's enough to make any traffic cop gulp with dismay. But Tony confines his tricky travelling to the circus.



Hurting along the trail in a 100 m.p.h. aero-sled! That's the way this Canadian trapper goes to work. He built his bustling buggy from plywood, aluminium and an old aero engine. The propeller is cut down to fit the vehicle, and the rudder at the rear provides steering.



"Our business is your business" must be the slogan of at least one American building firm. Nosy parkers are welcome! In fact, the firm has cut holes in the fences around their building sites at a convenient height for passers-by to see what is going on.



Norwegian ski-star Bjoern Maelle is head over heels in favour of this amazing method of crossing a busy road. But motorists at Stryn, in Norway, don't bat an eyelid—unless they're newcomers. For Bjoern does it practically every day during Winter.



TIGER KEEN STRIKES FIRST!

THE mission will be extremely dangerous, m'sieu," warned Rochy, the Parisian jeweller.

He dangled an emerald and diamond necklace from his fingers, and smiled gently at a tall broad-shouldered man with an out-thrust granite-like jaw, who stood by the window of his office.

The big man, whose name was Tiger Keen, turned away from the window that looked down on the Rue Royale.

"I live on danger," he smiled grimly. "If this had been an easy task you wouldn't have sent for me."

"No," agreed Rochy. "It is the Sheik Hamid himself who desired you to deliver the jewels. There are enemies who might seek to obtain them, ruthless enemies. The necklace is worth fifty thousand pounds—and they will stop at nothing to get it! Your job is to deliver it to the Sheik himself, at his palace in Hoggar. This is a photograph of him, in uniform! He was at one time an honorary officer in the French army."

Keen glanced at the photograph, memorising it. Tiger Keen lived for adventure. It was his profession. He would go anywhere anyhow, and at any time. Being unattached to the police or any other official body he received many strange commissions. When he undertook a job, he had a reputation for finishing it.

He took the necklace, dropped it into a small washleather bag, and gave a grim laugh.

"This place is being watched," he said coolly. "There is a man waiting outside there who has followed me from my hotel, where you called last night. That visit was indiscreet, Rochy. Looks as if trouble's already waiting for me."

Rochy started.

"No," he exclaimed, in alarm. "They could not be as quick as that . . ."

The hand which held the cigarette to his lips shook. Tiger Keen had already noticed that the little finger of that hand had one joint missing.

"You don't know who in particular might be after these jewels, then?" he inquired. "Then go over to the window, and you will see the man I

Top-Speed Thrills in Paris, at Sea, and in North Africa

mean. Grey suit and white panama. Reading a newspaper outside the entrance. Ah, you don't know who he is. In that case it may be interesting to find out. As sole agent and representative of 'Adventure, Unlimited,' I believe in quick action against any opposition."

Rochy turned from the window, and whistled in surprise. Tiger Keen had arrived in a plain grey lounge suit, hatless, and carrying a small case. Now he was changing swiftly into a pale blue linen suit of American cut, which he had taken from the case.

A touch of spirit gum on his upper lip, a false hair-line moustache, and a pair of sun-glasses quickly transformed his visitor. Tiger Keen was a master of lightning disguise. He had come prepared.

He dropped the bag with the necklace carelessly into a pocket of his jacket, and lit up a cigar.

"Au revoir, my dear Rochy. I shall be back to collect my fee when the jewels have been delivered. Or you can send it direct to my London office."

A wave of the hand, and Tiger Keen vanished.

Seconds later, Tiger Keen descended from the palatial offices of the great jeweller, and emerged on the street. He walked quickly across the pavement. The man in the panama gave him a quick, incurious glance, then resumed reading his newspaper again.

"You were waiting for me, my friend?" asked Keen in sibilant French, as he stopped close beside him on the kerb.

The watcher started. His olive-coloured face twitched in alarm. One hand let go the newspaper and slid towards a pocket.

Crack!

Tiger Keen's fist smashed like lightning to the fellow's jaw, sending him reeling against a post-box. At the same time Keen whistled, then leaped to catch his victim before he could fall to the ground.

A car slid almost miraculously to the kerb, its driver throwing open the rear door quickly. The driver was a young Chinese with twinkling almond eyes.

"Get a move on, Soo!" barked Tiger Keen.

He literally tossed his burden into the back of the car, and jumped in after him. The car swung away into the traffic, accelerating quickly. Swiftly, expertly, Keen commenced searching his victim. At last he gave up in disgust.

The man carried nothing but an automatic, a cigarette case, a roll of French money and some loose change. There was no clue to his identity or his employers.

"A Moor by the look of him. That links up with Hoggar, where the Sheik has his palace. Well, there's no use carrying extra luggage."

Keen stripped off the man's jacket, replacing it the wrong way round, so that his victim's arms were pinned inside. Then he leaned forward and spoke

to Soo. The car was speeding into a large park, between rows of trees and bushes. A few hundred yards on it slowed down.

Tiger Keen slid open the door, and with the vehicle almost at a crawl, rolled out the unconscious man. As he hit a mass of fallen leaves in the ditch Soo accelerated again.

"You hired a good car," chuckled Tiger. "It's fast enough. Now we've to get out of Paris as quickly and as quietly as we can. There are berths booked for us on the 'Bouree' leaving Marseilles tomorrow."

Crack!

Something shattered the glass partition on Keen's left. His face was spattered with flying splinters. Keen instantly dropped flat.

"Being followed, eh?" he shouted. "And using silencers on their guns. Faster, Soo! Give it all you can. This is the last spot we want to stay in. Make for the Mireille Tunnel below the Seine! Hurry!

"Yes, honourable master," shouted back Soo. "Keep excellent top-knot on. The speeding will be terrific!"

"Bad shooting," drawled Tiger Keen, laconically, as another bullet shivered the back window of the car, and a third ricocheted loudly off a rear wing. "Trying to get our tank or a tyre, of course, and . . . the necklace!"

He crouched on the floor of the car, removing his disguise. The car screamed speed; rocking dangerously on corners, zig-zagging in and out of traffic.

Tiger smiled. He could leave it to Soo, the cool, clear-headed little Chinese, whom he had tested a score of times. They were out of the park and back in the streets. The tunnel . . .

Brooo-ooommmmm!

Tiger jumped up. They were plunging down into the dimness of the underwater tunnel now. It was a twisting, sinuous affair to commence with, just broad enough for two lanes of traffic. Dimmed electric lamps hung from the vaulted roof.

Tiger peered backwards through the shattered window. There was no sign of their pursuers. But they would be close behind.

"Slow down on the next long bend," hissed Tiger. "I've got to stop these fellows, Soo. When you get clear, park the car, phone the hirer where he can find it and come to me—you know where!"

Soo nodded, bent over the wheel. Tiger Keen had now opened the sun roof, and was crawling out on top of the vehicle. Tiger knew the Mireille Tunnel. It carried power cables, and telephone cables under the Seine. There was a narrow catwalk along each side of the roof for the benefit of inspecting mechanics and repair gangs.

Tiger saw the first fingers of pursuing headlights appear in the snaking darkness behind him before

he crouched then sprang upwards with the lithe speed of a tiger itself.

His fingers caught in the steel web above, and he drew himself up with a lightning jerk of well-trained muscles. Then, crouching among the girders, he pulled a pistol from inside the belt of tiger-skin he wore beneath his clothing.

The car with Soo was out of sight. Now the pursuing vehicle, long, sleek, black and at rare blinding speed, flashed past beneath him. Tiger Keen had perched himself in the same direction as it was travelling. His gun was already levelled. His keen eyes were narrowed.

Crack! Bang!

As Tiger squeezed the trigger the explosion of the cartridge was echoed by the bang of a bursting tyre. He had just had a second for that desperate shot. But Tiger Keen seldom missed.

The black car skidded wildly, zig-zagged with screeching brakes before it crashed into the tunnel wall.

"Good!" grinned Tiger Keen, and climbing over the rail of the catwalk started running back towards the tunnel entrance, silently, unseen by the cars and other vehicles that flashed past below. One was a police car. Two were traffic cops on motor-cycles.

Before he climbed down an iron ladder to the ground near the entrance, Keen glanced back.

The traffic cops had roared to a stop as the dazed crooks staggered from their car, too shaken to resist arrest.

THE TIGER WHO WORE A TURBAN

TEN minutes later he was aboard a taxi and heading over a Seine bridge into another part of Paris. There he dropped off at a street corner, and walked to a small restaurant.

The head-waiter walked up, peered, then gave a start of recognition.

"Monsieur Tigre!" he breathed.

"The private room, Pierre," said Tiger. "And then some coffee and newspapers. When my friend arrives we'll have a meal. I leave it to you."

The man bowed, led the way up the restaurant and showed Keen into a small private dining-room. There was a small washroom off it. Tiger, looked at himself in the mirror there and saw his face was flecked with blood. Little slivers of glass from the shattered partition were imbedded in his cheek.

He felt inside the tiger-skin belt beneath the waist-band of his trousers, and extracted a tiny waterproof zip-bag. Taking a pair of miniature tweezers he removed the splinters. A few drops from a phial of disinfectant in some water followed. Once he had washed the cuts, Keen sealed them with a colourless fluid from a tiny tube.

He had drunk two cups of coffee, and read two of

the newspapers which the waiter brought him, before Soo arrived. The little Chinese carried a small case.

"Everything jake?" asked Keen.

"Most excellent jake," reported Soo. "Honourable master eliminated pursuit most efficiently. What now is in cookery book, boss?"

"These fellows were stick-at-nothing thugs," grunted Keen. "But I think we've given them the slip meantime. Now, you will go to the shop on the corner of this street, and collect a large parcel which has been left there for us, by our friend the jeweller."

He smiled at the little Chinese.

"The parcel contains disguises. We sail from Marseilles tomorrow night on the 'Bouree' as the Hindu prince, the Ram of Titagur and his servant. But tonight we take the train to Bordeaux. From there tomorrow we catch a plane to Marseilles. Fetch the parcel here. Then we shall eat, and later, change for our journey."

Soo folded his hands and bowed.

"All is then arranged, honourable master?"

"Rochy arranged everything, tickets and all," grinned Tiger. "So far, our unknown friends have supplied the fireworks. If they should turn up again we'll be ready for them."

Soo bowed, and left. Tiger Keen finished his second newspaper. Then leisurely he withdrew the wash-leather bag from his pocket. Before emptying it on the table cloth he rose and locked the door.

"Fifty thousand pounds worth," he murmured, inspecting the gems. "Well, no wonder our late friends were so anxious to get hold of them. But..."

Suddenly Keen's eyes hardened. He swept the necklace back into the bag and this time slipped it inside the tiger-skin belt beneath his waist-band.

He rose, frowning.

"I wonder?" he gritted. "It used to be a goat to bait a tiger. It would be something new to use a tiger as bait. But we'll see. Whatever happens, the Sheik Hamid of Hoggar gets his jewels. Tiger Keen always delivers the goods!"

Three days later, the Ram of Titagur, otherwise Tiger Keen, and his servant, otherwise Soo, were alone in their cabin on the "Bouree."

"Tomorrow we reach Hoggar," said Tiger Keen. "Now that we've left Algiers behind I think I'll go on deck and have some air. I'll be glad to say good-bye to this Oriental suite, anyhow."

Soo bowed.

The shipping company had certainly tried to make His Highness the Ram of Titagur at home. The suite was hung with silk curtains, and furnished in Eastern style. There were even little curtains of tinkling beads and coloured glass to shade the lights. Tiger Keen wrinkled his nostrils as an exotic perfume assailed them.

"The smell, as Soo would say, is terrific," he growled. "I'm going up to watch that French tourist who hopes to become a golf champion."

Tiger's face was tinted with a waterproof dye. So were his hands. Otherwise the only disguise he wore was a silk turban. Soo wore a small turban and silk suit. His master's suit was European.

There were few passengers on the "Bouree." They had shown scant interest in the Ram of Titagur. The Ram, alias Tiger Keen, was only interested in one of them, and that for purely sporting reasons.

Doctor Mazet, a tourist passenger, was a devotee of golf, and endeavoured to keep himself in practice

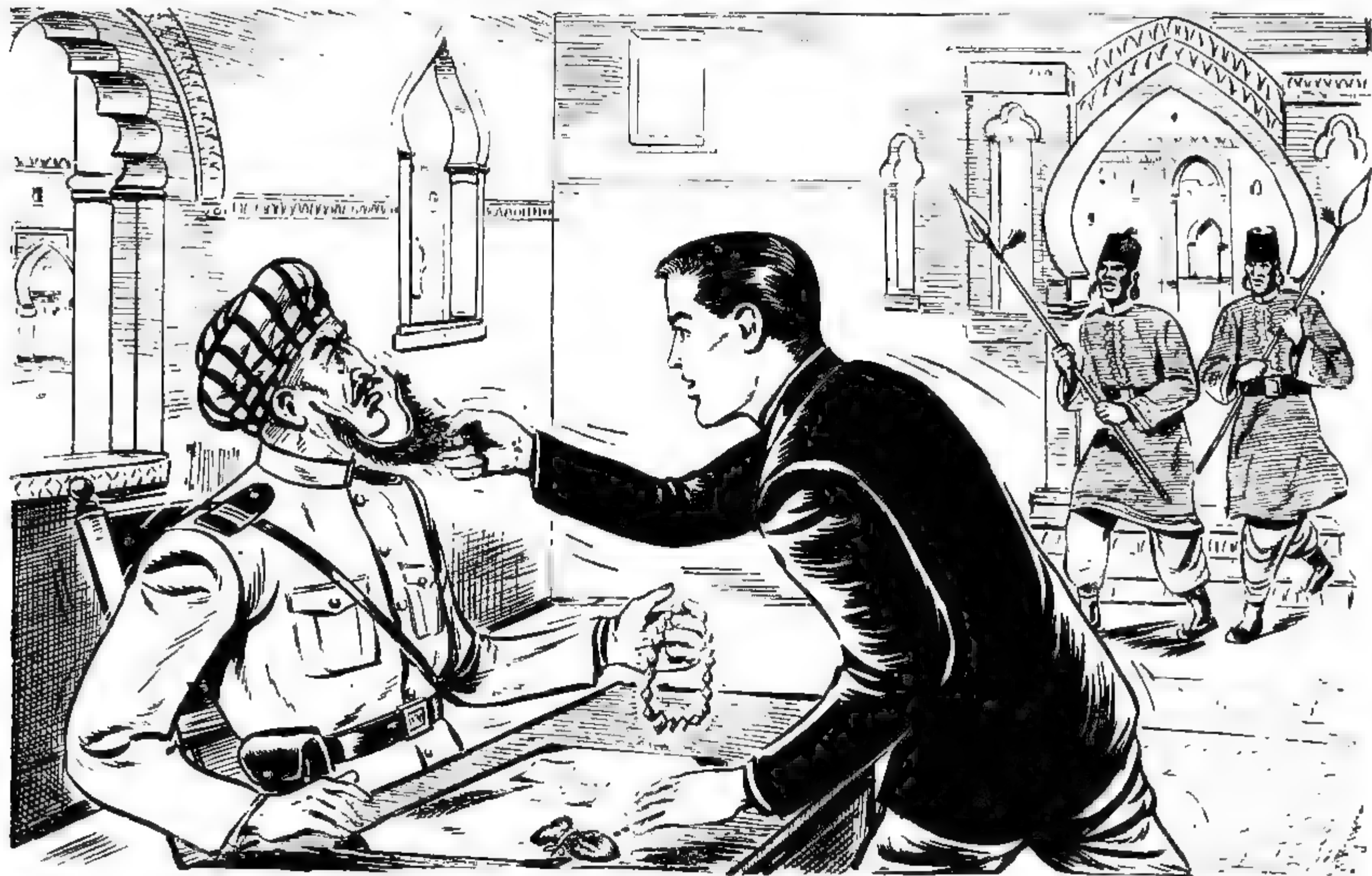
"You're inclined to slice your shots. I wonder if it is the grip. Now here is the grip I should use—the interlock. Permit me."

He took the club from Mazet's grasp and demonstrated. The ball sailed away high and straight into the blue. Dr. Mazet clapped his hands.

"That was magnificent. Almost professional!" he cried.

"I'm fairly good at most games, Dr. Mazet," said Tiger modestly. "But I prefer something more thrilling than golf. You should try that grip of mine, all the same."

Keen walked the deck an hour before going below again his face wrinkled in deep thought. He headed



Grasping the beard, Tiger gave it a sharp tug—and it came away in his hand. He had proved that the man was an impostor!

by driving golf balls off the deck and into the sea every morning and afternoon.

He was hard at the job when Tiger reached the deck.

"Still at practice, I see, Dr. Mazet," Tiger greeted him.

The doctor nodded. He was medium height, and heavily bearded.

"When one becomes middle-aged, one must do something for exercise," he said in a bird-like voice. "The golf is more interesting than the bicyclette."

"Of course," nodded Tiger Keen, watching him smack a ball away out into the Mediterranean.

for the gymnasium instead of his suite, where he put in some hard exercise before going for a cold shower, and to change for dinner.

It was already dark, and the night was warm. Tiger opened the door of his suite and stepped in...

Then he let out a furious shout and leaped across the exotically-furnished stateroom. Soo lay unconscious on the floor, his hands tied behind his back, his mouth gagged. The whole place had been thoroughly and expertly ransacked.

A faint sound came from the bedroom... then a sound like a buzzing wasp.

Tiger recognised that sound—the sound of a

heavy throwing knife whizzing through the air towards him!

And a split second later he felt the wind of the singing knife-blade ruffle his hair as he threw himself forward in a desperate dive for the entrance to his sleeping-quarters.

One outflung hand locked round the bare ankle of the slim, almost naked Arab who stood there, his body glistening with oil. A jerk and the intruder was down. Tiger leaped to improve his advantage, but his opponent was like an eel. It was almost impossible to get a secure hold on his oiled body.

With a sudden wrench the fellow tore himself free, bounded on to Keen's bunk and started wriggling through the open porthole. The moment he vanished Tiger was on his feet and bounding for the deck.

Up the companionway he rushed, scattering startled passengers and crew to left and right. Then, leaping to the rail, he took a headlong dive overboard. The moon was up, revealing to him some distance away, the head of a swimmer. About a mile to starboard faint lights showed the North African shore.

Tiger Keen plunged head and shoulder deep into the wavelets, and swam hard. Behind him a siren blew and bells clanged as the "Bouree's" engines stopped, and a boat was lowered.

"I'll get that slippery customer somehow, and force him to talk," thought Tiger fiercely. "Whoever is after these jewels has my tour pretty well organised for me."

His quarry was swimming hard, but Tiger was slowly but surely gaining. As the big adventurer closed in, he dived. A sudden flurry came in the water. The oily visitant to Keen's quarters rose half out of the water, his face contorted in agony.

The rays of an electric headlight on the prow of the approaching boat showed him clearly, with Tiger's head just behind him. Keen had his quarry gripped in a lock round one leg and the body from which there was no escape.

Still the man did not scream. His eyes rolled in terror and then he went limp, uttering queer gasping sounds. He was in a dead faint when Keen hoisted him into the boat. Tiger climbed after him. He still wore his turban. The sea had taken no effect on the waterproof dye on his skin.

"A thief! He jumped from the porthole in my cabin. He must have smuggled aboard in Algiers," said Keen tersely to the French crew of the boat, as he bent over his prize.

But try as he could, Keen was quite unable to make the man say a word. And it wasn't long before the tough adventurer realised the reason for his lack of success. The man was dumb! Whoever the crooks were who were after Sheik Hamid's jewels

they took no chances. This man could never talk and give his employers away!

Keen sat grim and thoughtful as the boat turned to rejoin the ship. He gave no greeting to anyone when he clambered up the side to the deck, except to tell the captain that the man he had caught was a thief.

"Bon, m'sieu," bowed the captain. "He shall be locked up and handed over to the police at Hoggar."

Tiger Keen hurried below. A steward had found his stateroom open and had just released Soo. The little Chinese was very apologetic. He had been resting in his bunk when he had been surprised. The intruder had entered by the porthole after scrambling down a rope dropped from the deck above, where he had been hidden in a lifeboat.

"Our friends are very thorough," said Keen grimly. "But they did not get the necklace, Soo. It was well hidden."

He stood up, and reached a hand to the central light. From the circular fringe of beads and glass which shaded it, he withdrew a string of green and white stones.

"Honourable boss very hot stuff," gasped Soo, as Tiger Keen stuffed them into his tiger-skin belt beneath his waistband.

Keen shrugged his shoulders.

"Tonight, Soo, I am going to play cards late with Dr. Mazet, after dinner is over. I am interested in Dr. Mazet, and also in seeing that Sheik Hamid gets his property delivered safely. I'm going to beat this gang if it's the last thing I do. Now, here are your instructions."

And Soo listened carefully as Tiger told him what to do while the card game was in progress.

TIGER DELIVERS THE GOODS

THE following morning, after a pleasant evening spent playing cards with the bearded Dr. Mazet, Tiger Keen stepped ashore at Hoggar. Soon, he was telephoning, from his room in the town, to Sheik Hamid.

"At six o'clock, your Highness. Yes, I shall be there."

Tiger Keen laid down the telephone.

It was only a few minutes since the "Bouree" had berthed.

"Order a car for me at five-thirty," he told Soo. "I am going to the palace. You shall drive me."

At five to six Tiger Keen's car entered the courtyard of the Sheik's palace.

He smiled farewell to Soo, and presented himself at the main entrance of the central building. A soft-footed Arab servant led the way across a marble hall, and up a flight of stairs. There he knocked softly at a door, then ushered Keen inside.

The room was furnished in modern style. At a desk a man in uniform was seated. Keen glanced

first at the uniform and then at the man's face with its short pointed beard.

"Sheik Hamid?" he bowed.

"Be seated, effendi," smiled the Sheik, "You have arrived safely with the jewels."

Tiger Keen nodded, sat down on the chair opposite his host's and started emptying the wash-leather bag he had taken from a pocket, on the surface of the desk between them.

The sheik's eyes glistened as he bent over them, and lifted the necklace in his fingers. Then suddenly his glance hardened. Unseen by his guest his knee pressed a secret buzzer in the desk.

"What folly is this?" snarled Sheik Hamid harshly. "These jewels are fakes. Where is the real necklace, Keen? Speak quickly or it will go hard with you. I am not a man to be trifled with."

Tiger Keen laughed.

"I know they are fakes," he replied. "And so, I think, are you! It's too bad you dressed in a hurry—your beard doesn't quite match the colour of your sideboards!"

He rose out of his chair in a lithe spring, one hand tugging at the sheik's beard. It came away in his hand just as a door behind opened and two armed Nubians stepped in.

"Seize this man," cried Tiger Keen. "He is not your master whom I came to see, but an impostor!"

The unmasked man's hand had dropped to the revolver in his holster, but even as he withdrew it Tiger Keen bounded up on to the desk and with a lightning kick sent it flying. It exploded harmlessly in a corner as Keen flung himself on his man and bore him to the floor, where his head cracked against the parquet, stunning him.

"It is Ismillah, the Vizier," cried one of the servants in Arabic. "What does it mean?"

"He posed as your master, so doubtless your master is a prisoner somewhere. Search his apartments!" ordered Tiger.

In a few minutes the real sheik was found, gagged and bound in a cupboard of his own sleeping chamber. He held out a grateful hand to Tiger Keen, and gave the man his servants were carrying off, securely bound, a last contemptuous smile.

"Ismillah knew he was soon to be dismissed, so he planned to rob me," said the real sheik. "He knew the valuable necklace was being returned by Rochy's firm after being cleaned and re-set. It tempted him."

He gave a scornful laugh.

"He took me by surprise this afternoon, doped me, and tied me up, then made himself up in my place," the sheik continued. "In his vanity he told me everything. How his agents had tried to

intercept you in Paris, and another to find the necklace on the steamer. When he knew you had arrived safe in Hoggar, and would come to the palace he planned a last cunning move. But your keen eyes noted that fault in his dress and you surprised him."

"He was more surprised when he found I had been carrying fakes," grinned Tiger Keen. "He and others knew you had commissioned me to bring the necklace safely here. So you and Rochy planned to use me as bait, with fake stones, while the necklace came another way. That was the idea, wasn't it?"

The sheik flushed, then smiled. A servant entered.

"I hope you did not mind when you found out, Mr. Keen?" he asked pleasantly. "Oh, what is it? Another visitor? Dr. Mazet! Yes, show him in!"

The servant bowed and returned with Dr. Mazet. The newcomer smiled and sat down.

"I have brought the jewels," he said softly, taking a cardboard box from his pocket. "Safely hidden away inside these dozen Falcon golfballs. Of course I had arranged things with the Customs beforehand. You see, these balls are dummies. They open out in two halves and . . ."

He gave a grasp of surprise as he tried to unscrew one of the golf balls that he had taken from the box—and found that it was quite impossible.

" . . . And, hey presto, they just won't come apart," chuckled Tiger Keen. "Your plan was clever, Dr. Mazet, and your bearded disguise was excellent. But I know that you are really Rochy, the jeweller! If you hadn't played golf and interested me in your grip I could never have recognised you aboard the 'Bouree.' But that missing joint on the little finger of your left hand gave you away!"

Rochy's face was a study.

"You knew . . . all the time that I was Rochy?" he gasped.

"Yes, and while I was beating you at cards last night my servant Soo was going through your belongings. He found the golf-balls containing the real gems, and replaced them with new ones from the steamer sports shop. Here are the real jewels."

Tiger Keen took his hand from inside his tiger-skin belt and laid the gems on the desk.

"Tiger Keen always delivers the goods, in person," he grinned, "even when he is being used as bait. Just one or two things I noticed made things add up. That's the best of having been blessed with a keen pair of eyes. But next time either of you wish to bait a crook, don't use a tiger! Still, it was all a great thrill while it lasted!"

TED RITCHIE AND KEN DALE WERE IN SOUTH AMERICA WITH ARCHIE, THEIR WONDERFUL ROBOT. THEY WERE SEARCHING FOR TED'S BROTHER, JERRY, A FAMOUS T.V. NEWS-CAMERA-MAN, WHO HAD BEEN FORCED TO CRASH-LAND HIS PLANE FAR FROM CIVILISATION

ROBOT in The S.O.S. from the FORBIDDEN CITY

BY MARK ROSS



WITH ARCHIE AT THE WHEEL, THE PALS' STURDY "TANKMOBILE" CARRIED THEM DEEPER AND DEEPER INTO WILD JUNGLE TERRITORY

"S.O.S.! GOING DOWN IN HORSESHOE VALLEY ---" THAT WAS JERRY'S LAST MESSAGE, KEN — TEN LONG DAYS AGO. AND SO FAR WE HAVEN'T FOUND A TRACE OF HIM



DON'T LOSE HOPE, TED. WE WON'T GIVE UP — EVEN IF WE HAVE TO SEARCH ALL THE WAY FROM HERE TO THE AMAZON

AS THE VEHICLE BREASTED A RISE, TED UTTERED AN EXCITED SHOUT

LOOK — THAT VALLEY'S SHAPED JUST LIKE A HORSESHOE. WE'RE ON THE RIGHT TRACK AT LAST

YOU'RE RIGHT, BY GLORY. C'MON, ARCHIE — STEP ON THE GAS

GUIDING THE ROBOT'S MOVEMENTS WITH HIS RADIO CONTROL PANEL, TED MADE THE MECHANICAL MARVEL "PUT HIS FOOT DOWN"

BOY! TAKE A GANDER AT THOSE ANCIENT BUILDINGS. I WONDER IF THE NATIVES WHO LIVE IN 'EM WILL BE HOSTILE?

THEY'RE BOUND TO BE, PAL. WHITE MEN AREN'T WANTED IN THESE PARTS. BUT WE'RE NOT TURNING BACK UNTIL WE'VE LOCATED OLD JERRY

THE TANKMOBILE SURGED ON AT TOP SPEED. SUDDENLY TED GAVE A GASP



JUMPING JACKRABBITS — WE'VE RUN SLAP-BANG INTO A BATTLE!

IN A FLASH ARCHIE JAMMED ON THE BRAKES



YOU'RE NOT KIDDING! THOSE FOREST SAVAGES ARE TRYING TO FIGHT THEIR WAY INTO THE CITY. IF THEY SUCCEED, I GUESS JERRY WON'T STAND A DOG'S CHANCE — THAT IS, IF HE'S STILL ALIVE!

AT THAT MOMENT THE PALS WERE SPOTTED! HOWLING HIDEOUSLY, ABOUT A DOZEN TRIBESMEN CAME TEARING TOWARDS THEM



LIKE LIGHTNING TED MADE THE ROBOT ROLL TWO GREAT ROCKS TOGETHER AND TIE A ROPE TO THEM



THE ROCKS NOW FORMED A HUGE BOLAS



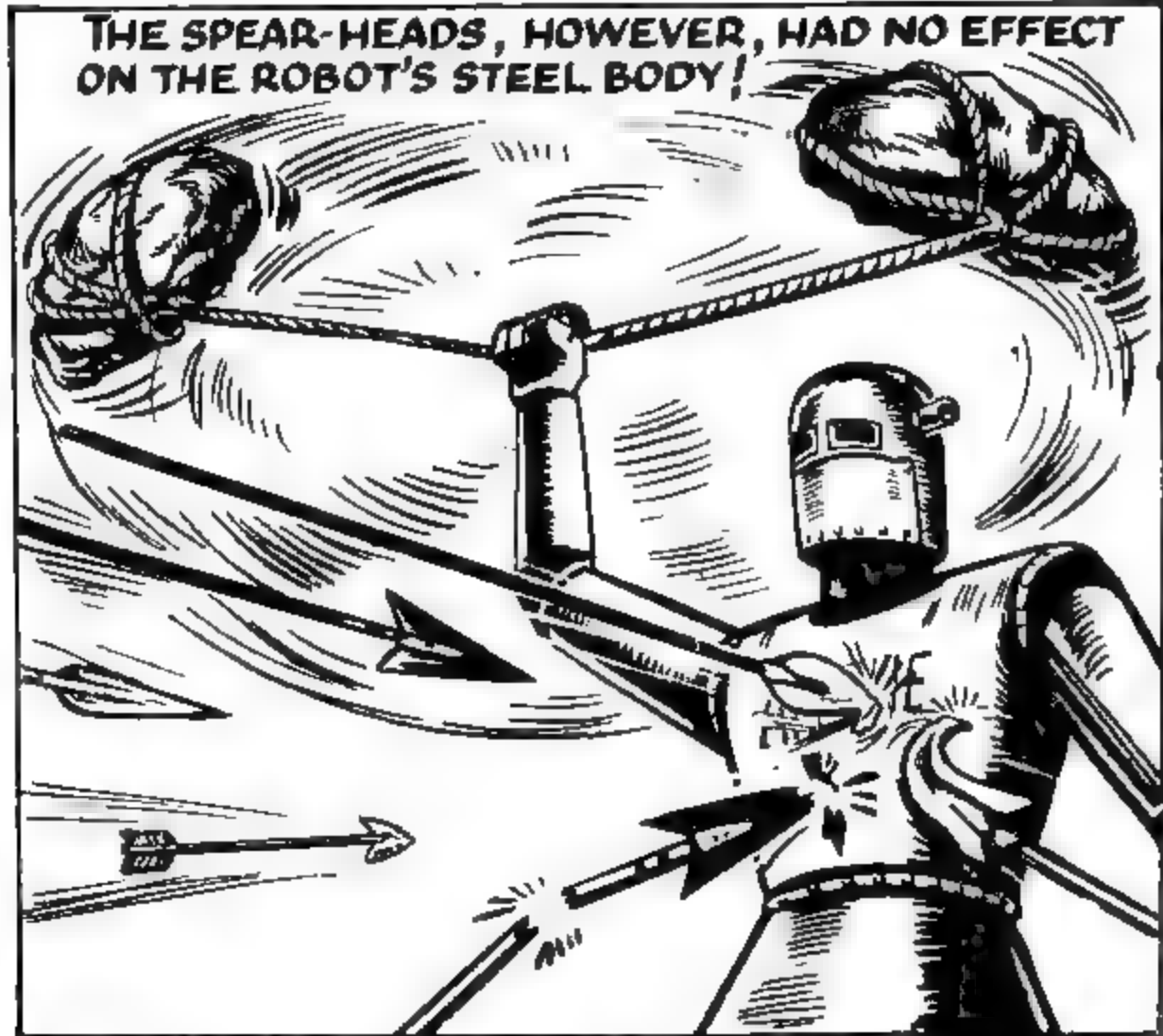
WHIRLING HIS HEAVYWEIGHT WEAPON, THE ROBOT BOUNDED DOWN THE SLOPE



THE ATTACKING SAVAGES UTTERED AWE-STRICKEN YELLS



THE SPEAR-HEADS, HOWEVER, HAD NO EFFECT ON THE ROBOT'S STEEL BODY!



NOW IT'S ARCHIE'S
TURN TO ATTACK.
WATCH OUT FOR
FIREWORKS!



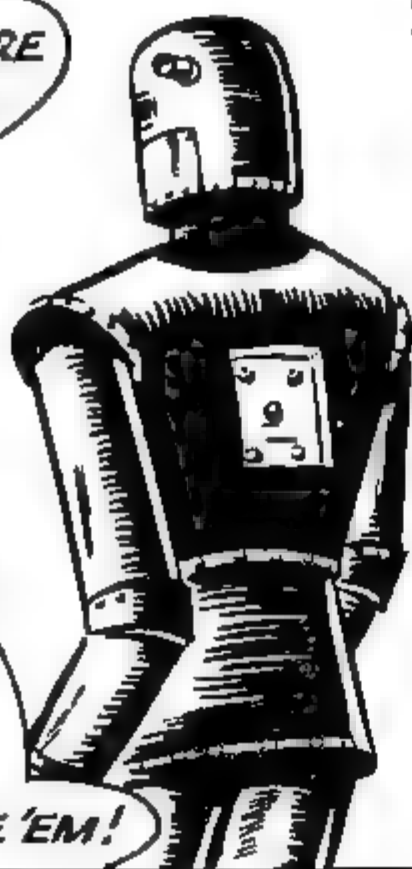
BUT WHEN THE FIERCE-LOOKING TRIBESMEN FOUND THAT THEIR SPEARS
WERE USELESS, THEY BOLTED IN PANIC-STRICKEN TERROR



IN NEXT TO NO TIME THEY HAD
VANISHED FAR INTO THE JUNGLE. TED
AND KEN THEN HASTENED TO REJOIN
THE ROBOT

GREAT WORK,
ARCHIE! YOU SURE
SETTLED THEIR
HASH!

AND NOW
THOSE PEOPLE
IN THE VALLEY
MAY ASK US IN—
AFTER THE GOOD
TURN WE'VE DONE 'EM!



TED'S HUNCH WAS RIGHT. THE NOBLE-
LOOKING NATIVES GREETED THEM WITH
OPEN ARMS

WELCOME TO
OUR CITY, WHITE
STRANGERS!

THE METAL MAN
SAVED US FROM OUR
SAVAGE ENEMIES.
COME AND JOIN US IN
A FEAST OF VICTORY!



AS A RULE OUR CITY IS
FORBIDDEN TO MEN FROM
THE OUTER WORLD. BUT
WE SHALL BE HONOURED
TO ENTERTAIN YOU



IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE THE PALS WERE APPROACHING THE CENTRE
OF THE CITY

WHAT AN AMAZING
PLACE! THESE PEOPLE
MUST BE THE DESCENDANTS
OF SOME ANCIENT
CIVILISED RACE

THEY'RE
BOUND TO HAVE
SPOTTED YOUR BROTHER'S
PLANE BEFORE IT CRASHED.
WE'LL ASK 'EM



AS THE TANKMOBILE CAME TO A
HALT, TED ALIGHTED AND
ADDRESSED THE CHIEF

O GREAT WARRIOR! WE
SEEK A WHITE MAN WHO
FELL INTO YOUR VALLEY FROM
A WHIRRING BIRD IN THE SKY.
HAVE YOU NEWS OF HIM?



THE NATIVES' NEXT MOVE TOOK TED AND KEN COMPLETELY BY SURPRISE



A WHITE BIRDMAN, YOU SAY? SEIZE THEM, GUARDS!

WHA-AT? LET GO, YOU FOOLS! WE'RE YOUR FRIENDS!

SWIFTLY THE PALS' WRISTS WERE TIED, HOWEVER. THEN THE CHIEF SPOKE TO THEM IN A STERN VOICE



YOU NOT OUR FRIENDS! THE ONE YOU SEEK CAME DOWN TO US IN A WONDERFUL ROARING EAGLE. BUT HE CAUSED IT TO DESTROY OUR SACRED TOTEM! BECAUSE OF THIS, JUNGLE ENEMIES ATTACK US, AND FURTHER ILLS WILL SURELY BEFALL OUR TRIBE!

DESPITE THEIR PROTESTS, TED AND KEN WERE BUNDLED INTO A SMALL CELL



IT WAS ALL AN ACCIDENT, I TELL YOU. WE CAN EXPLAIN EVERYTHING!

SILENCE! LIKE THE BIRDMAN, YOU WILL STAY LOCKED AWAY—FOR EVER!

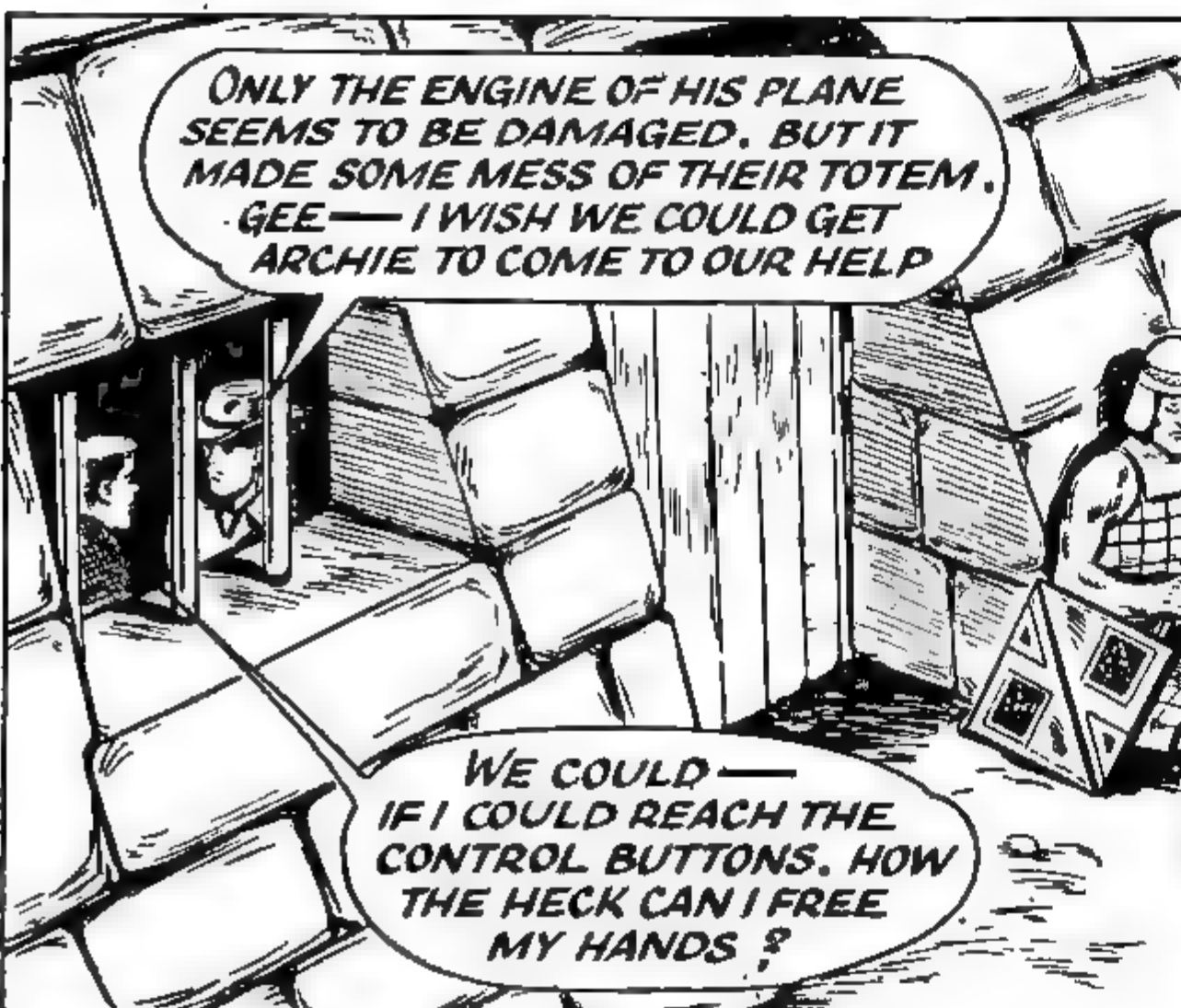
WHITE STRANGERS SHALL BRING NO MORE EVIL ON US

THE DOOR WAS BOLTED ON THE OUTSIDE. TED AND KEN AT ONCE RUSHED TO THE BARRED WINDOW—TO STARE IN RELIEF, AND YET IN DISMAY



GEE—THAT'S JERRY'S PLANE RIGHT ENOUGH. AND THEY SAID THAT HE'S IMPRISONED. SO HE'S STILL ALIVE!

BUT WE CAN'T HAVE A SHOT AT RESCUING HIM. FOR WE'RE AS MUCH IN THE SOUP AS HE IS!



ONLY THE ENGINE OF HIS PLANE SEEMS TO BE DAMAGED. BUT IT MADE SOME MESS OF THEIR TOTEM. GEE—I WISH WE COULD GET ARCHIE TO COME TO OUR HELP

WE COULD— IF I COULD REACH THE CONTROL BUTTONS. HOW THE HECK CAN I FREE MY HANDS?

SUDDENLY TED HAD A BRAINWAVE



GOT IT, BY THUMP! MY WRIST COMPASS— THAT'S THE VERY JOB!

YOUR COMPASS? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

TED'S ANSWER WAS TO THUMP HIS WRIST AGAINST THE CELL'S STONE TABLE



IN AN INSTANT TED WAS SAWING AWAY AT HIS BONDS



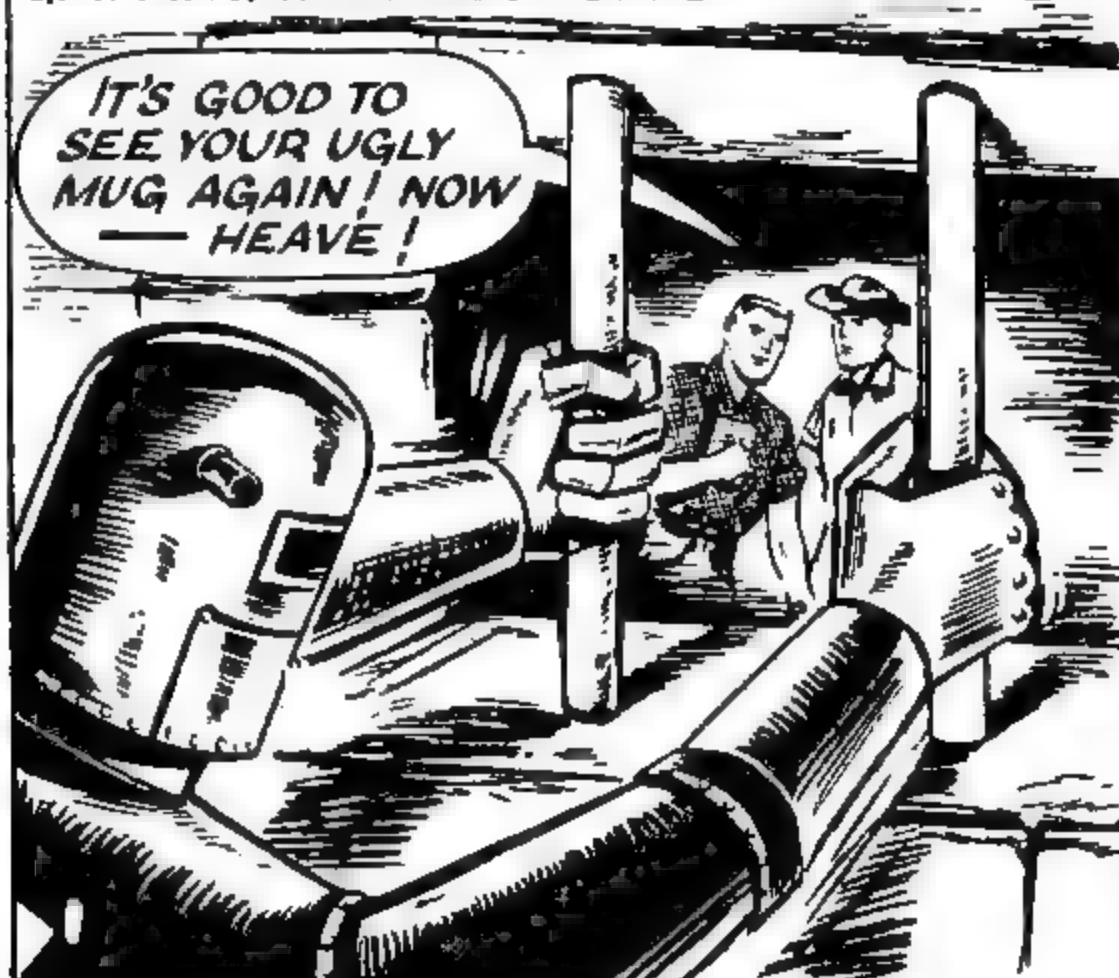
A MINUTE LATER HE WAS FREE. WITHOUT DELAY HE RELEASED KEN'S WRISTS. THEN HIS FINGERS FLASHED TO THE PANEL WHICH CONTROLLED THE ROBOT



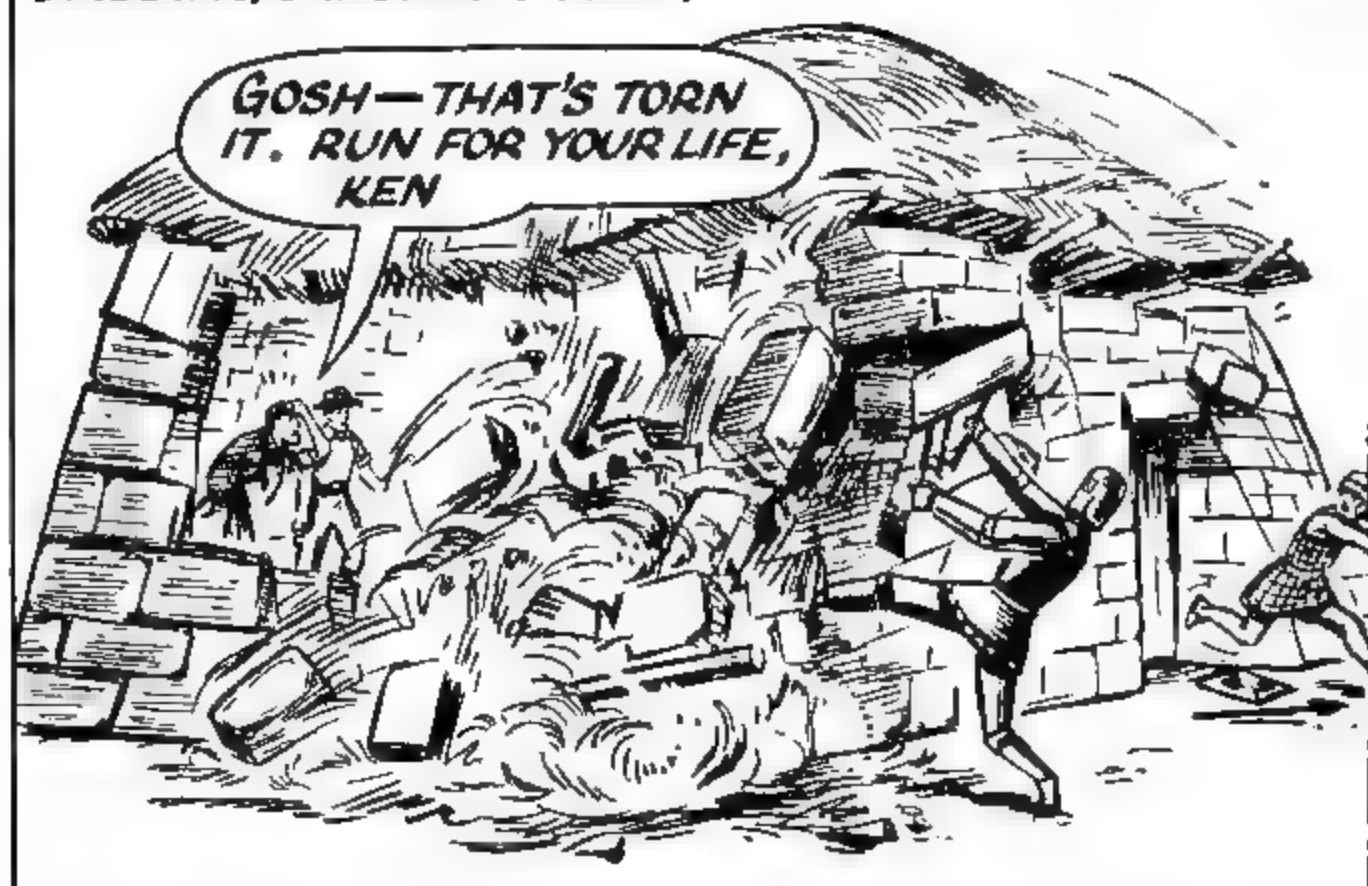
THE SQUARE WAS DESERTED. AND NO ONE SAW THE ROBOT START TO MOVE



THE PALS' LUCK HELD. SOON ARCHIE WAS GRIPPING THE PRISON BARS



ARCHIE TOOK THE STRAIN. WITH ALL HIS MIGHTY STRENGTH HE WRENCHED AT THE BARS. BUT INSTEAD OF THEM GIVING WAY, THE COMPLETE FRONT OF THE PRISON BUILDING CRASHED DOWN!



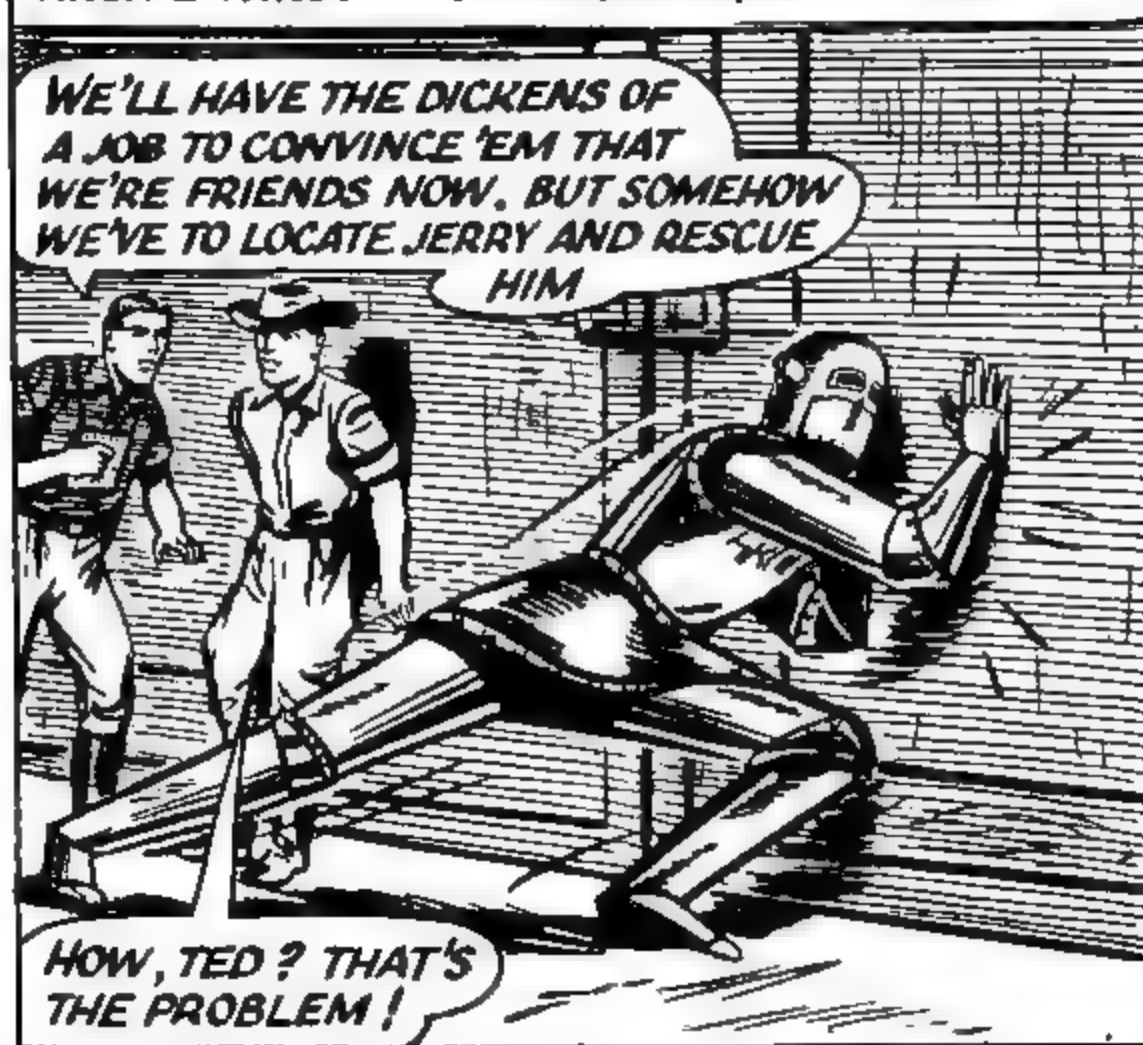
AS THE TRIO DASHED AWAY, THE GUARD RACED TO A NEARBY GONG AND SOUNDED THE ALARM



TED LED THE WAY INTO A BUILDING WHICH APPEARED TO BE A TEMPLE



ONCE INSIDE, THEY SLAMMED THE DOORS AND ARCHIE THRUST HIS WEIGHT AGAINST THEM



TED RACKED HIS BRAINS, STRIVING TO THINK OF AN IDEA. THEN, AS HE PEERED FROM A HIGH WINDOW, HIS EYES BEGAN TO GLEAM



OPENING THE DOORS, HE MADE ARCHIE STRIDE THROUGH THE ANGRY CROWD



BLOWS RAINED DOWN ON THE ROBOT—BUT HE DIDN'T FALTER



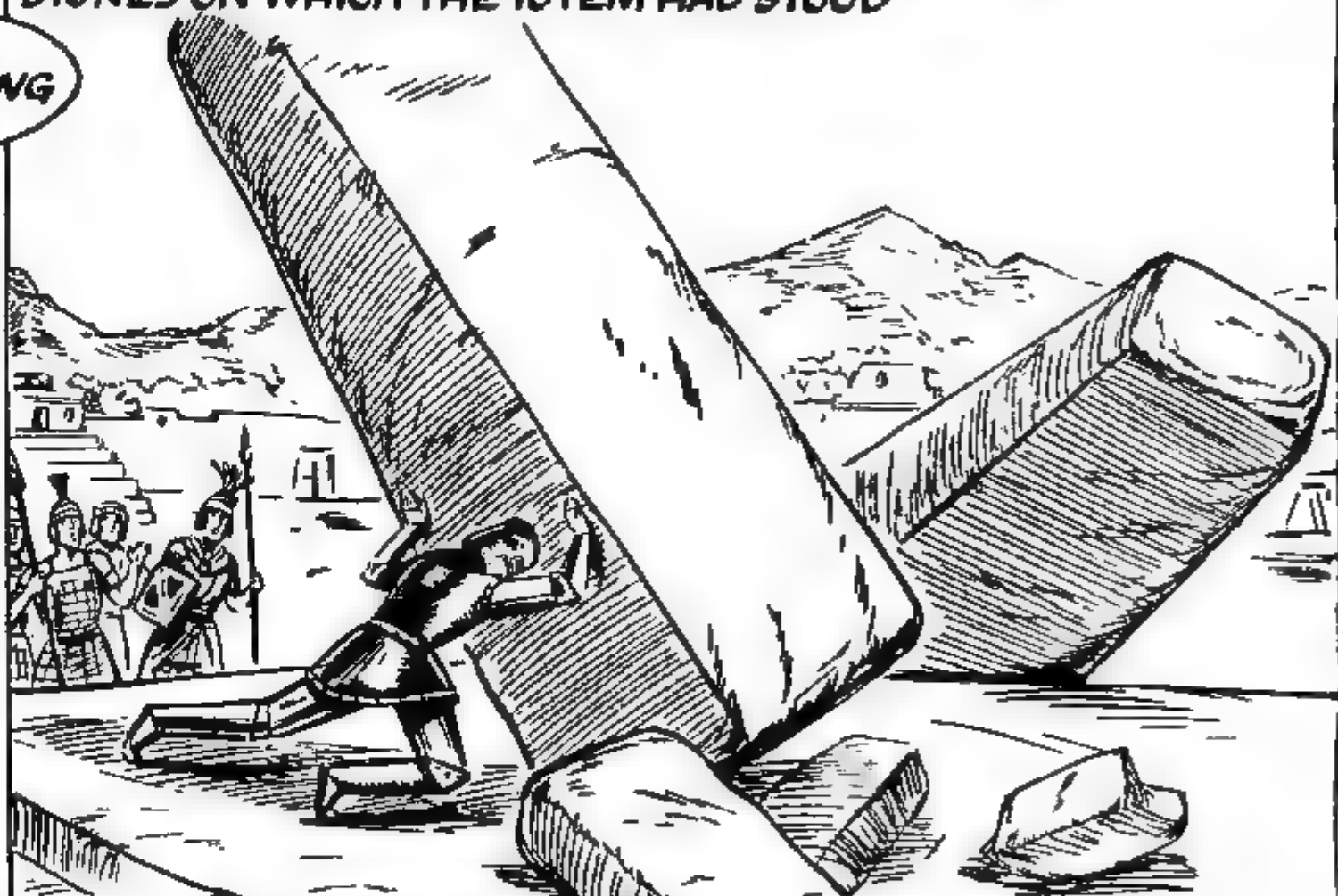
THE NATIVES WERE ASTOUNDED AT ARCHIE'S BEHAVIOUR!



TED EXPERTLY GUIDED THE AMAZING ROBOT STRAIGHT TO THE SCENE OF THE PLANE CRASH



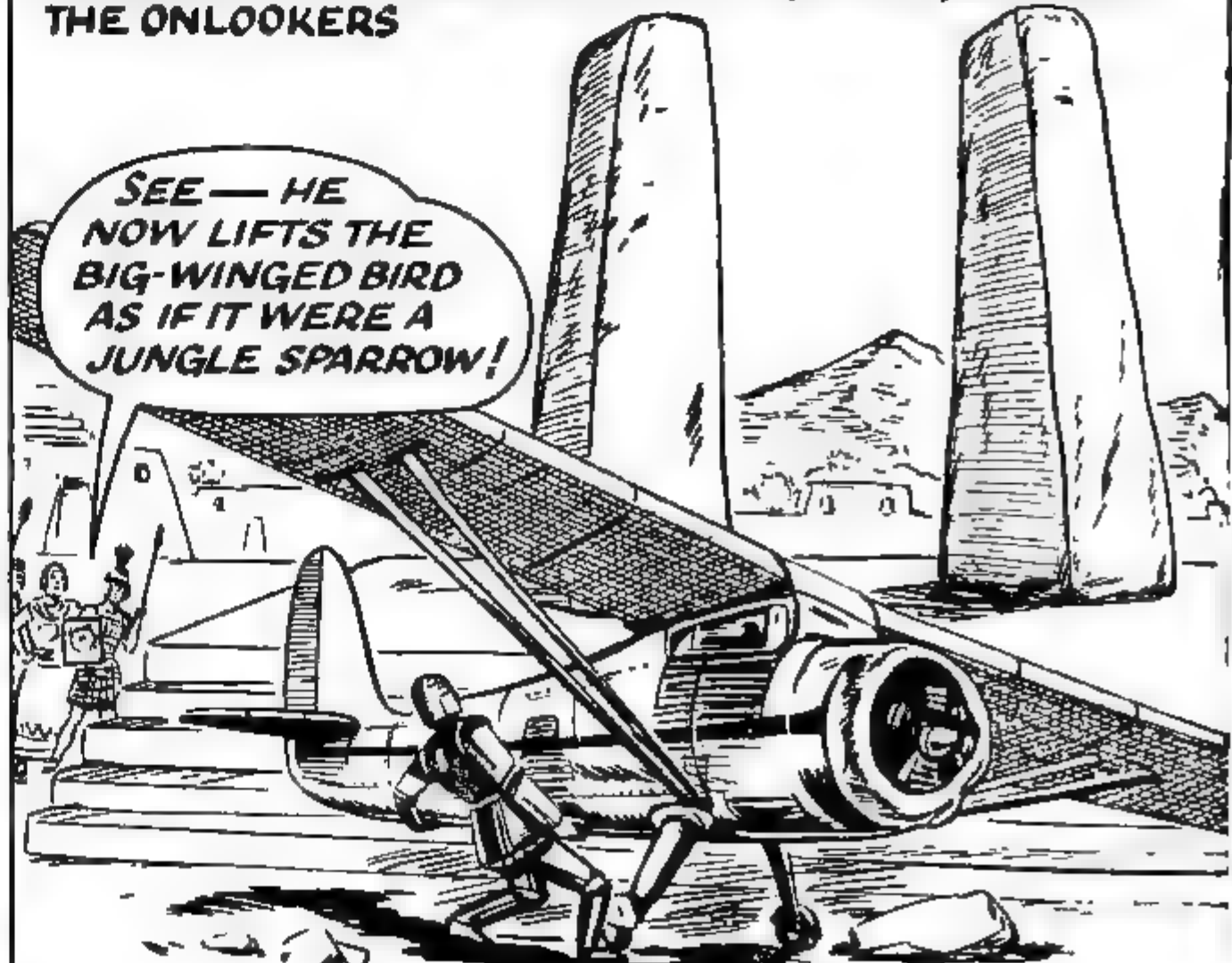
TO THE ASTONISHMENT OF THE NATIVES, ARCHIE USED HIS TITANIC STRENGTH TO SET ABOUT RESTORING THE HUGE STONES ON WHICH THE TOTEM HAD STOOD



HEAVING, HOISTING, LEVERING, THE MECHANICAL MAN GRADUALLY WRESTED THE SLABS BACK INTO PLACE



ARCHIE'S NEXT MOVE BROUGHT A GREAT GASP FROM THE ONLOOKERS



THEN THE MASTER-STROKE OF TED'S PLAN BECAME APPARENT



THE PALS THEN STEPPED FORWARD FEARLESSLY

BEHOLD! OUR METAL MAN HAS RE-ERECTED YOUR SACRED STONES. AND THE WHIRRING BIRD WHICH ACCIDENTALLY KNOCKED THEM DOWN WILL NOW WATCH OVER YOU. NO LONGER IS IT NECESSARY TO KEEP IN PRISON THE WHITE STRANGER WHO FLEW HERE! WE ASK THAT YOU GIVE HIM HIS FREEDOM!



ONLY FOR A SECOND DID THE CHIEF HESITATE. THEN---



A MOMENT LATER AN AIRMAN RACED FROM A NEARBY BUILDING — AND TED GREETED HIM WITH A JOYFUL YELL



BY THE STARS, IT'S GREAT TO SEE YOU, TOO! BOY, HAVE I GOT SOME AMAZING PHOTOS HERE. "ROBOT BUILDS TOTEM IN FORBIDDEN CITY!" — IT'LL BE A T.V. SENSATION THE WORLD OVER!



THAT NIGHT, THE CHIEF GAVE A MAGNIFICENT FEAST IN HONOUR OF THE PALS. AND THE NEXT MORNING THE EXCITED TRIO PILED INTO THE TANKMOBILE



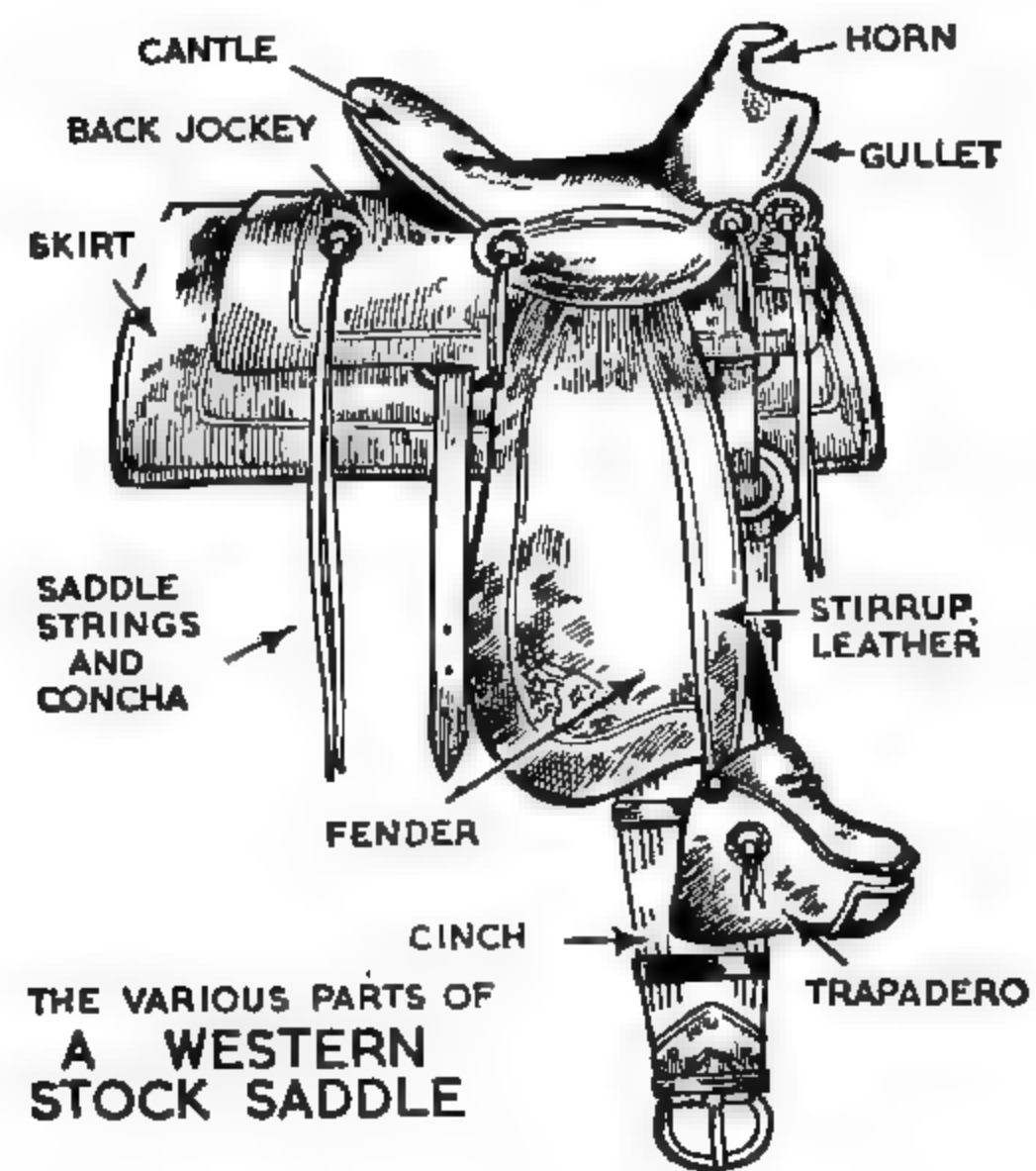
SHOWERED WITH GIFTS, THE JUNGLE ADVENTURERS DROVE OFF



The End!



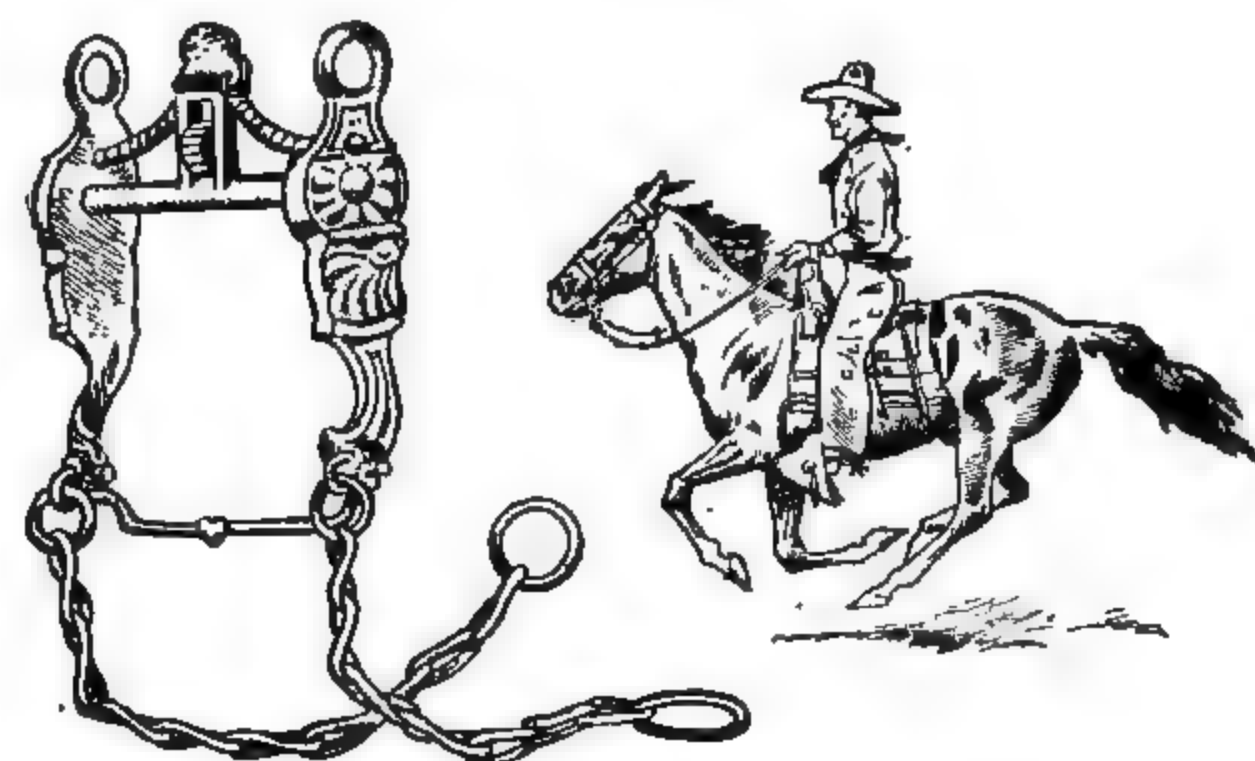
In the 16th Century, Spanish explorers who landed on the coast of America took horses and cattle ashore with them. The grass and climate were so agreeable to the animals that the herds rapidly increased until eventually they numbered many thousands. Despite the hundreds of years which have passed since those early days, many links with the original Spaniards remain.



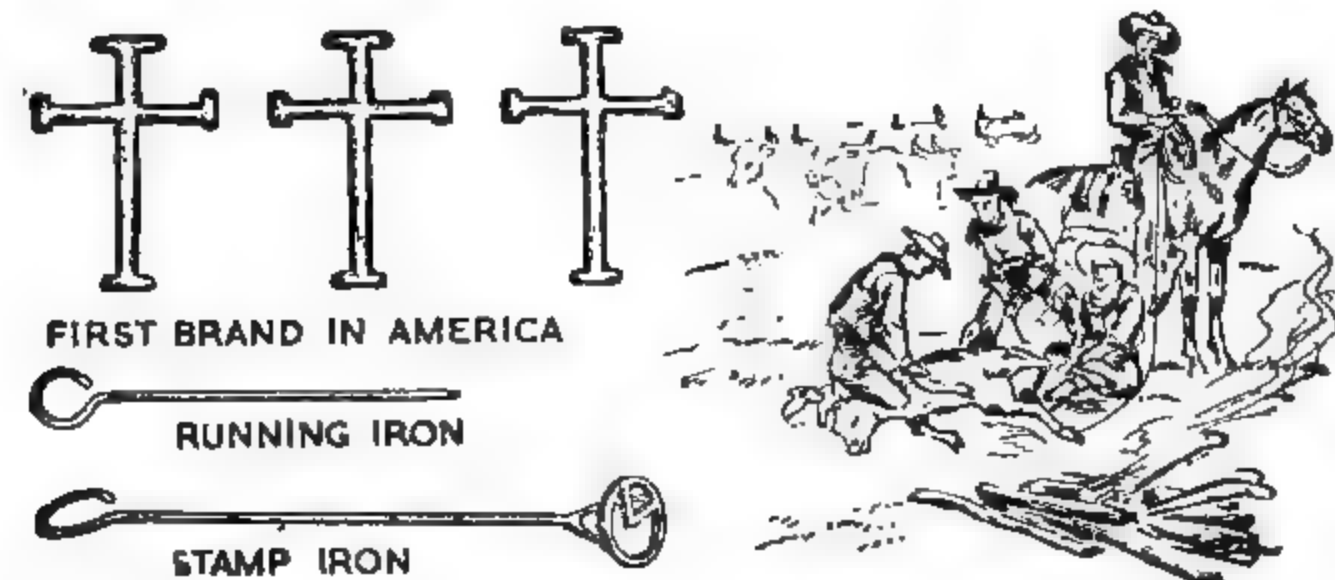
THE VARIOUS PARTS OF A WESTERN STOCK SADDLE



The Western stock saddle bears quite a number of similarities to the old Spanish type. It has been streamlined, of course; but it is still very suitable for carrying the cowboy's gear; it has the strength to take the strain of a wild steer on the other end of a rope wound round the saddle-horn; and it is comfortable to use even on a long journey.



The Spanish spade bit shown above is a good example. As the slightest touch on it is felt by the horse, it enables the cowboy to ride with a loose rein.



FIRST BRAND IN AMERICA

RUNNING IRON

STAMP IRON

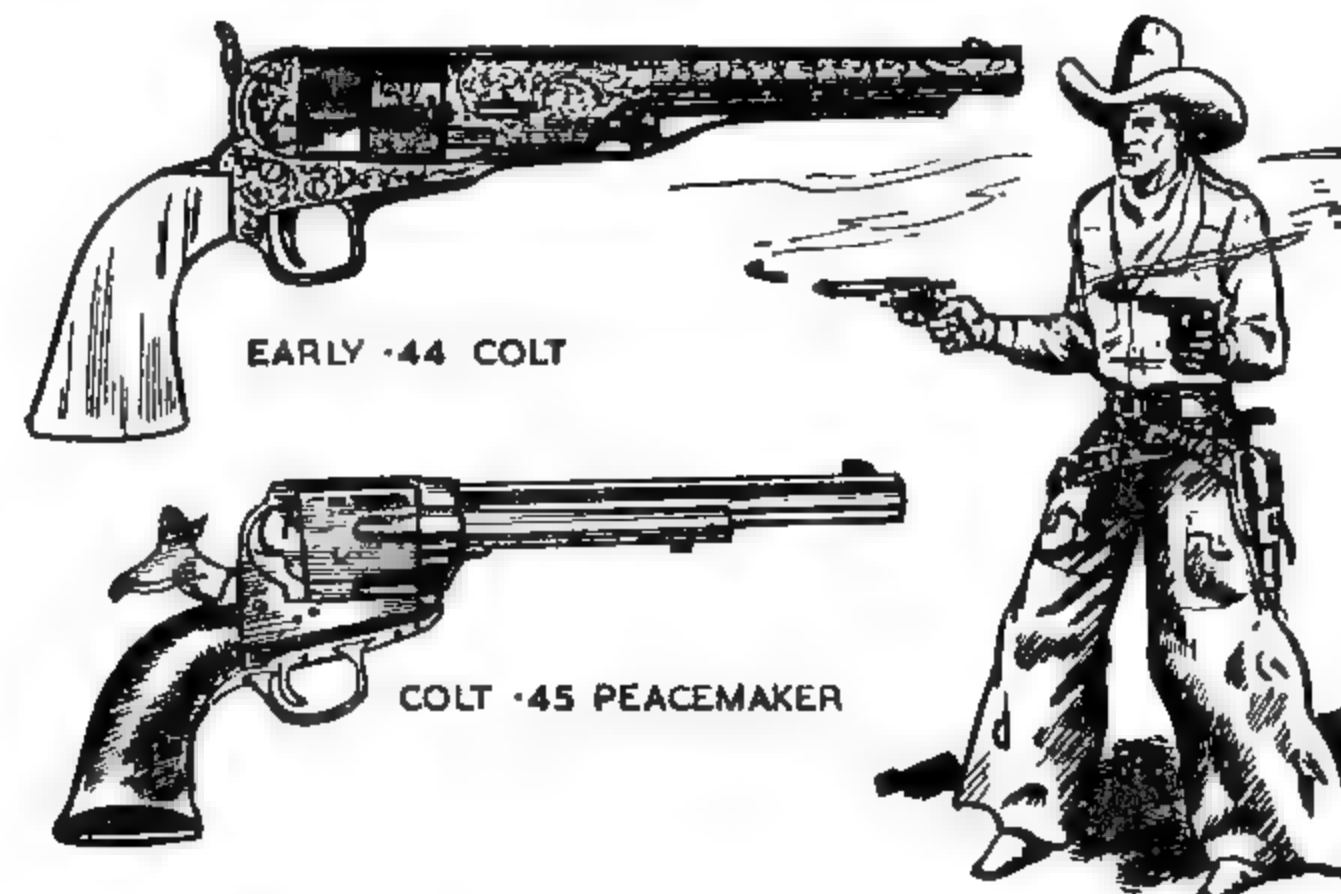


ARROWHEAD ROCKING R COFFEE POT LONGHORN LUCKY SEVEN.
The first brand in America consisted of the three crosses which Cortez, the Spanish explorer, used as his symbol. All kinds of ingenious brands were invented later, samples of which are shown above.

COWBOYS WERE SPANISH EXPLORERS!



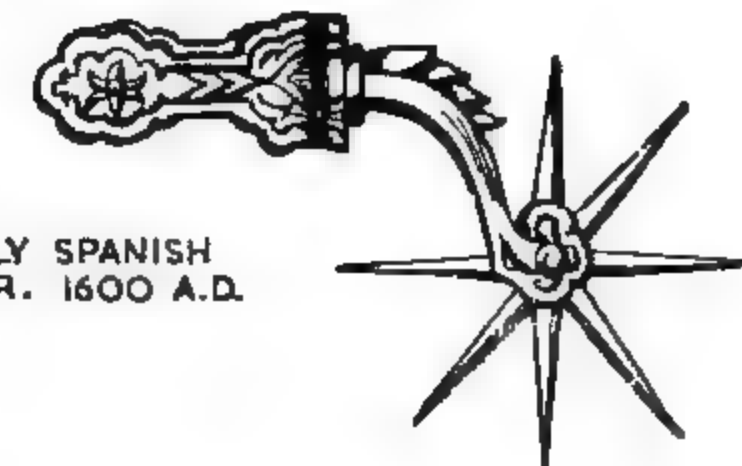
The word "lariat" was originally the Spanish "la reata" (the rope). Cowboys found such a rope invaluable. It used to be made of rawhide, and the cattlemen prided themselves upon their lassoing and spinning skill. Nowadays many lariats are made of nylon.



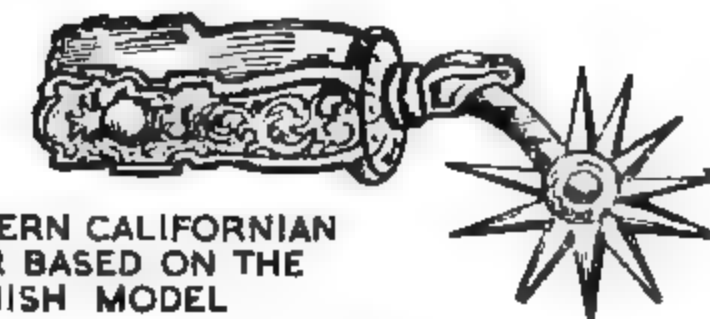
EARLY .44 COLT

COLT .45 PEACEMAKER

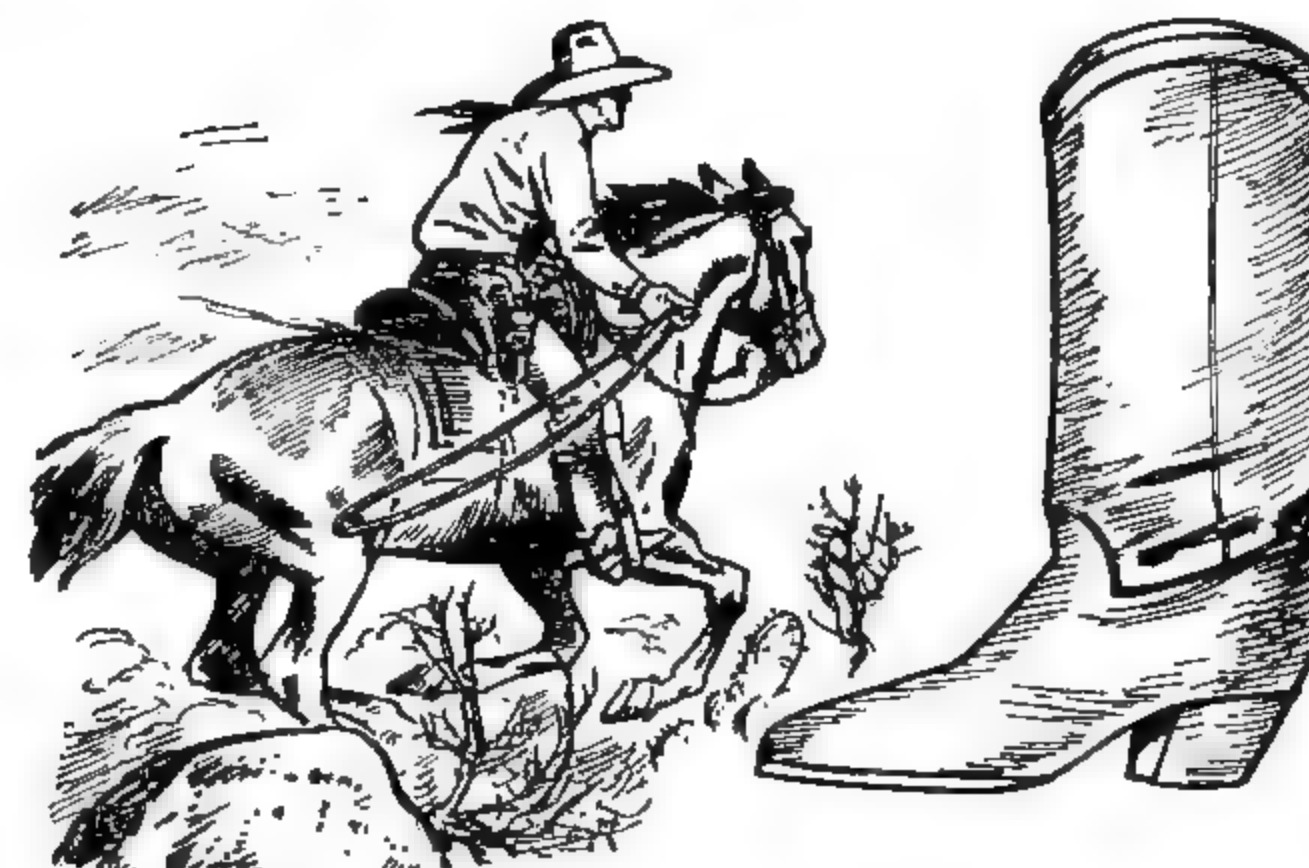
As a protection against rustlers and bandits, cowboys found pistols a very useful weapon. A man named Sam Colt is thought to have hit on the idea of a revolving cartridge-cylinder whilst he was watching a ship's paddle-wheel turning. A revolver greatly increased the cattlemen's fire-power.



EARLY SPANISH SPUR. 1600 A.D.



MODERN CALIFORNIAN SPUR BASED ON THE SPANISH MODEL



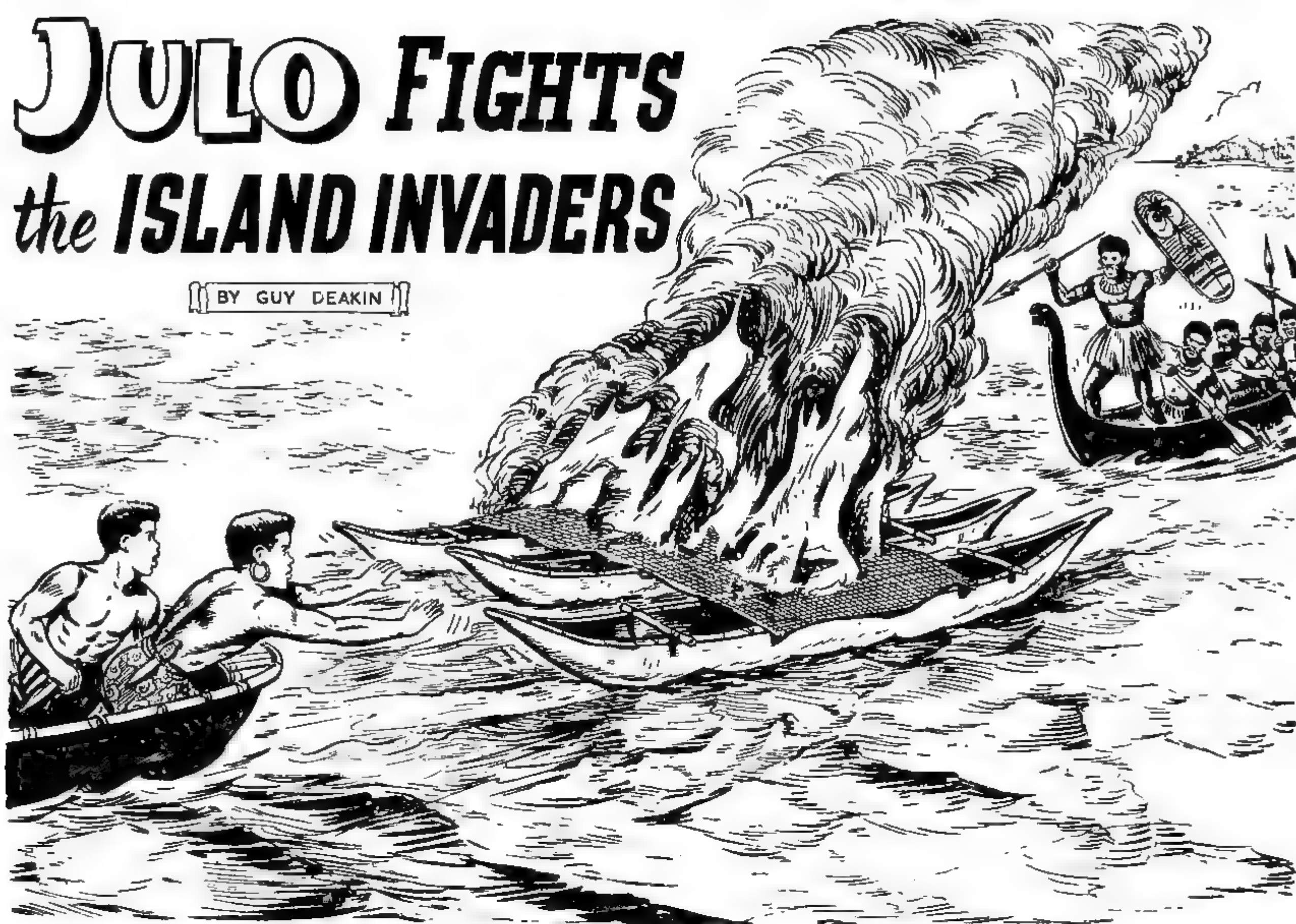
The calf-high boot isn't worn just for show. It prevents the wearer's legs from being torn by thorn and cactus; and the long heel enables him to keep a good grip in the stirrup.



The Spaniards introduced two styles of riding—one with the long stirrup and the other with the short stirrup. The long-stirrup style is more comfortable when travelling great distances. Over the years the length of the rowels (revolving spikes) on the cowboy's spurs has become much shorter.

JULO FIGHTS the ISLAND INVADERS

BY GUY DEAKIN



A DANGEROUS MISSION!

"WE must catch as many fish as we can with our big net, Wangi. More than half of our island's warriors are ill with the weak-leg sickness. Our fish will help to feed them."

Julo, the boy of the islands, and Wangi his chum were paddling their canoe from end to end of the island lagoon. Behind them they were towing a huge net, trawling for fish.

The chums knew that Chief Meeda was greatly worried. The weak-leg sickness had struck down more and more of his fighting warriors. Food was running short on the island because the warriors were too weak to hunt or fish.

"And the Raji raiders may attack our island at any moment," Wangi exclaimed as he helped Julo to paddle their canoe.

"Yes," Julo nodded, looking out to sea. "If they knew that so few of our warriors could fight, it is certain they would sweep down on our village."

The raiders were a group of savage fighting men from distant Raji Island. For months past they had been making a series of lightning raids upon the peaceable tribes of the islands. It was always the same. They would attack, steal and loot as much as

they could, and then make a getaway to their hideout on one of the many uninhabited islands.

Suddenly, Wangi saw his chum shade his eyes, and stare intently over the blue, sunlit sea. Then Julo got to his feet, balancing himself skilfully while he peered keenly and long.

"A canoe comes speeding," he rapped. "I see but one paddler. It must be a messenger hurrying to our Chief. Quickly, Wangi, haul in our net. We will paddle to shore, to warn the Chief."

The net was well laden with fish. Hauling it close in, they towed their valuable catch behind them as they sped to the sandy beach. Then, staggering under the weight of their catch, they hurried to the village. Few warriors were to be seen. Most were in their huts, barely able to move from weakness.

Chief Meeda, who had been anxiously discussing the situation with those of his counsellors who were not also sick, eyed Julo and Wangi as they put down their load.

"This is a good catch," he nodded at them. "It will help us feed the sick warriors."

"My Chief," Julo rapidly exclaimed. "A messenger comes speeding to our island!"

A visitor was a rare occurrence on the island.

He Was Only Supposed to Fetch Some Medicine, but What an Adventure He Had!

Soon, the Chief and his counsellors, accompanied by Julo and Wangi, were hurrying down to the beach. The messenger had landed, and the Chief gazed at him keenly.

"He comes from the island of Oola," Chief Meeda stated. "I think he brings important news."

The Chief was right. The messenger bowed to the Chief, then gave his message, quickly and briefly, for he had other islands yet to visit, to carry his message to them also.

"To Oola has come a trade-ship with many fine things to exchange for palm oil. The trade ship has cloth and beads and sharp knives. I bring this news so that you can quickly send your palm oil, to barter for their fine goods. The trade ship stays at Oola only until tomorrow morning."

Julo and Wangi looked excitedly at one another. A trade ship was a rare visitor to the islands. Chief Meeda would surely wish to make an exchange. Much palm oil was in the island's store barrels. They could barter for many things.

Chief Meeda slowly shook his head. The chums stared at him in dismay. He was refusing this wonderful chance to secure much-needed cloth and knives, and other tools.

"No," he slowly replied. "I cannot send our barrels of palm oil to Oola. Many of my warriors are sick with the weak-leg sickness; and there is bad news that the Raji raiders are swooping on villages and islands. I dare not spare even one of the warriors who are well and healthy."

While the Chief was speaking, Julo gave a sudden start. He had just remembered—the trade ship always carried white-man medicine to exchange for island produce.

"My Chief," he excitedly blurted out. "On the trade ship will be medicine which would cure the leg-weakness sickness."

"That I know," the Chief agreed. "But much as we need it, I dare not send even one warrior from our island, in case the Raji raiders swoop on us. They are many in number."

"Then, my Chief, let Wangi and me sail the big-carry canoe, with its large sail, to Oola," Julo eagerly urged. "The big-carry canoe will hold many barrels of palm oil. The large sail will fill with wind, and quickly we will reach Oola. There we will exchange the oil for the medicine and hurry back!"

Gravely the Chief eyed Julo and Wangi. The messenger bowed and sped back to his canoe to pass on the news. Anxiously the chums waited for Chief Meeda's decision. At last, he spoke.

"You shall go," he quietly decided, and their eyes gleamed with excitement. "But remember. You must make haste to reach Oola, for the trade ship leaves at the sun's rise tomorrow. And you

must take great care of the palm oil. It is a whole year's harvest. Our warriors worked hard to produce it."

"We will take much care," Julo stoutly replied. "And we will speed back with the medicine, to cure our warriors of the weak-leg sickness."

"That will be good," Chief Meeda answered. "For I fear what would happen if the Raji invaded our island while so many of our fighting men are weak and unable to defend it."

Not a moment was now lost. Willing hands carried the full barrels to the shore. While the island's cargo canoe was hurriedly loaded with the barrels, Julo darted away. He dashed back, clasping his big fishing net. Its catch he had emptied out.

"Perhaps we will catch some more fish on our way back," he said to Wangi, dropping the net on board.

The cargo canoe was long and broad, built to carry paddlers on either side, with space down its centre for cargo. In its bow was a mast, with a furled rattan sail.

For a moment the Chief hesitated, eyeing the big canoe. Julo understood his doubts. He made haste to reassure the Chief.

"The wind will fill the sail and quickly speed us to Oola with our precious load of palm oil," he firmly declared, and Wangi nodded in hearty agreement. "Coming back, the medicine will not be so heavy as the oil. We can manage the big-carry canoe, my Chief."

"Then—go," said the Chief. "Make much haste and bring back the medicine safely."

Quickly the canoe gathered way under its broad sail. Swiftly it stood out through the opening in the lagoon reef, to the open sea.

Using a paddle as tiller, Julo glanced back. Already the island was falling out of sight.

"We will sail past the little island of Copa," he yelled to Wangi who was in the bows, as look-out. "It is the quickest route."

Wangi jerked round, looking with startled eyes at Julo.

"But—it is dangerous, Julo," he protested. "There are swift and dangerous currents near Copa. No one goes near Copa, not since many years ago when the hard stone was dug."

Wangi was referring to days of long ago, when hard stone for native weapons had been quarried on Copa. But now it was a deserted jungle-covered atoll, avoided because of its bad currents.

"Do not fear," Julo cried back at him. "I know the currents. It will save much time."

The big canoe sped onward, cleaving a fast passage with the wind filling out its tall sail. Wangi, in the bows, shaded his eyes, then turned and called out to Julo.

"Copa. It is ahead, Julo. Be careful of the currents."

Rapidly the island grew larger. Nearer and nearer it came. Julo, steering skilfully, was calm and confident. Then, suddenly, from Wangi came a startled cry.

"Look, Julo—canoes!"

Julo shot to his feet. The island was now clearly in sight and every second they were coming nearer. On its sandy shore were six long, sleek canoes.

Julo started in amazement. It was very unusual for men to brave the dangerous currents and land on Copa. What could have brought them there?

And then, as Julo noticed the high, carved prows of the canoes, he gritted his teeth in dismay.

"They are the canoes of the Raji raiders," he gasped. His eyes searched the shore and the atoll beyond. "The raiders must be sleeping. They can not have seen us, or they would be manning their canoes, to race out to attack us."

In a flash his mind was decided. Leaping to the sail, he hastily lowered it, yelling to Wangi as he did so.

"Quickly, Wangi, lie down. With our sail lowered, we are low in the water. Maybe the Raji will not now see our canoe if they wake up. Use your paddle, but keep low."

With furious strokes, taking care to keep down, they paddled the big canoe past the distant island. But from Wangi came a murmur of sudden dismay.

"A bad current has gripped the canoe, Julo. Look."

Julo darted a glance over the side. He bit his lip in anxiety. It was true. A fast current was sweeping the canoe towards the beach. He knew they were powerless to halt it.

"The Raji! They have woken up and seen us! See. They are coming!" Wangi cried.

From the trees fringing the shore had appeared yelling warriors. Racing to the shore, they launched their light bark canoes, and sped towards the chums' big cargo canoe.

"Wangi," Julo whispered. "We must slip overboard, and stay out of sight, close under the canoe's hull. We must not be seen."

They were barely in time. The bark canoes shot through the sea. Soon they reached the laden cargo canoe, and some of the joyful raiders leapt aboard it. Tucked close under the hull, out of view, the chums heard their excited and gleeful yells.

Unseen by the Raji islanders as they clung under the stern Julo and Wangi were towed towards the shore of Copa.

Above them they could hear the exultant raiders excitedly discussing their find while they gleefully examined the canoe's contents.

"This big-carry canoe belongs to Chief Meeda,"

one of them yelled. "It carries much palm oil."

"Yes," chuckled another of the raiders. "It must have floated away from his island. He will send many canoes to seek it. But they will not find it! And, while they search for it, we will raid his island . . . tonight!"

OUTWITTING SAVAGE RAIDERS

JULO gulped in horror. Not only had he failed his Chief and the sick warriors; he was to be the cause of the dreaded raiders swooping on the island, that night.

They were nearing the shore. A tongue of reef jutted from the water, nearby. Julo signalled to Wangi. Together they silently dived deep, and swam towards the reef.

Cautiously surfacing, they hid behind the reef, watching the joyful raiders beach the big canoe and dance round it with excitement.

"Look, Wangi," Julo breathed. "The raiders are not lifting the barrels of palm oil from the canoe."

"What does that mean?" Wangi wondered.

"They mean to take it somewhere else. But we have got to recover it, somehow. We must get it to Oola, before the trade ship leaves, to exchange it for the make-well medicine. And it must be done quickly."

The sun was hot, making the air balmy and sleepy. At last the gleeful raiders wearied of examining their amazing find. One by one they moved away, back to the cool shelter of the trees, and were lost to sight.

"They have gone back to sleep while the sun is high," Julo whispered.

"And they will rise when the sun goes to its sleep," Wangi grimly replied. "Then—they go to raid our island."

Julo gritted his teeth and thought with desperate speed. Into his eyes came a slow, determined gleam.

"Wangi," he muttered, eyeing their captured canoe, where it was drawn up on the distant beach. "We must recover our cargo-canoe and its valuable barrels of oil."

"Yes, but we cannot launch the canoe alone," Wangi replied. "We would have to first unload the barrels, then slide the canoe back into the water. Then put back the barrels of palm oil. The Raji would be sure to wake and see us."

"That is true," Julo nodded. "But I have a plan. It is full of fearful risk . . ."

"Do not let us waste time, Julo," Wangi begged. "It does not matter how terrible is the risk. We must try it."

"Good," Julo smiled warmly at his chum. Then he became deadly earnest once again. "In our

big canoe is the large fishing net. First, we must get that from the canoe."

He scanned the shore and the trees. Not a thing moved and all was silent. Even the birds and wild animals slept in the heat of the day, in the shade of the jungle.

Taking deep breaths, they dived. Swimming powerfully, side by side, they struck out, beneath the surface, for the shore. At last, with the utmost caution, Julo slid his head above the water. Then signalled to Wangi to surface, also.

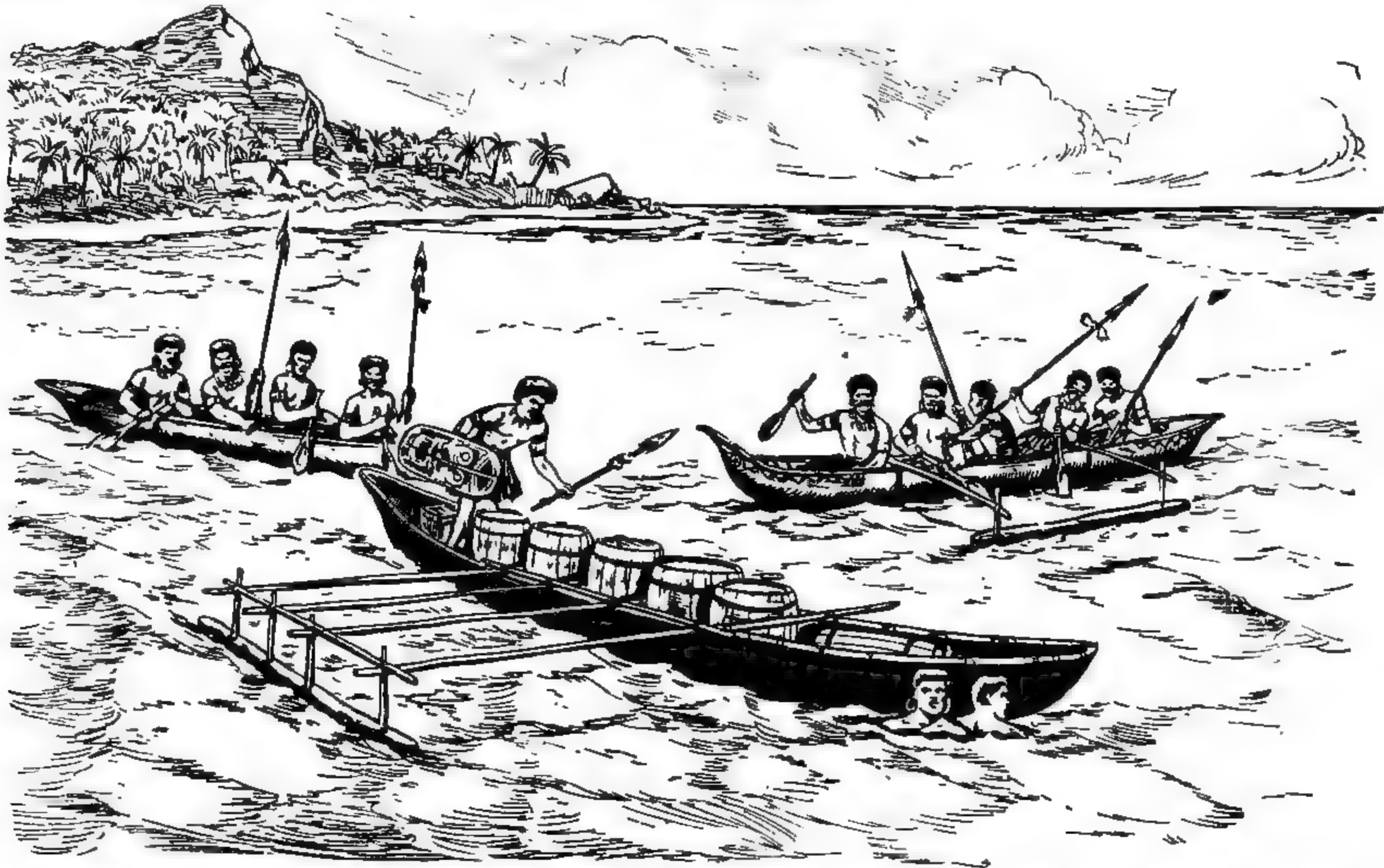
They were hidden from the trees by the big cargo-canoe, drawn up on the beach right ahead of where they now dog-paddled. In a moment they were

At last, Julo signalled to Wangi to turn again towards the shore. As they crawled on to the sand, Wangi saw they were quite a long way from their starting point.

"Now it should be safe to slip across the shore, to the trees," Julo said in a low tone. "Quick, Wangi, there is not a moment we must lose."

Clasping the big net between them, crouched almost double, they raced across the open beach. The shadowing trees fringing the beach grew thick and close. Panting with the speed of their dash, they hurled themselves into cover.

"What is your plan?" Wangi gasped, his chest heaving.



Their hearts pounding with excitement, Julo and Wangi kept well down in the water, hidden by the hull of the canoe. Would they be seen by the ruthless raiders?

wading ashore on hands and knees. They halted under the stern of the big canoe.

Not daring to speak, Julo half-raised himself, slid his hand over the stern, and smiled with satisfaction.

Wangi, watching him in tense silence, saw him gently begin to drag the big fishing net from the boat. Inch by inch it came until, at long last, it lay at their feet.

"Back into the water," Julo urged in a whisper.

With the net, they slithered away. In a few moments they were once again swimming underwater, dragging the net behind them. It was slow and desperately risky, for every few yards they were forced to rise for a lightning gulp of air.

"Once I came to Copa when I was small, when the hard stone was still being dug," Julo whispered. "Quickly, Wangi, we go to where it was dug."

Before his chum could ask more questions, Julo had picked up the net in his sturdy arms, and was pushing his way into the jungle. Wangi fell into step behind him, puzzled and wondering excitedly what Julo was scheming.

Their passage disturbed monkeys in the trees above them, and the colourful parrots squawked in angry protest. A sudden crashing in the undergrowth brought them to an abrupt halt. They held their breath, listening.

"It is a wild boar," Julo exclaimed. "We

disturbed it. It has sped away. Listen to its angry snarls and snorts."

The boar rapidly vanished, unseen, into the wild jungle. The chums pushed on towards their goal. Then, without warning, there lay before them a large and deep hole.

"Here is where the hard stone was dug," Julo said in a low voice. "See—it is the depth of five men, and its walls are cut clean and straight."

"The bottom is very thick with dead leaves," Wangi muttered, peering over its sharp edge, down to its floor. "It must be quite soft—like the nest of a giant bird."

Julo eyed the leaf-padded floor, and nodded. Then he gave Wangi rapid instructions.

"Quickly, grasp the other edge of the net, Wangi. With it, we are going to cover over this big hole."

At last Wangi began to understand why his chum wanted the net. Eagerly, he leapt to obey. Gripping one end of the large net while Julo grasped the opposite end he made his way along the edge of the big hole. Julo worked along the other side.

With great care, they spread the net, pegging it down with lumps of discarded hard stone, as they went. When the net was fully spread, covering the top of the big, deep hole, Julo signalled to Wangi, who was on the far side.

"Throw twigs and sticks, and small branches on to the net," he called softly, "until it is covered."

While Wangi rapidly went to work to carry out his chum's urgent command, Julo cut a long length of liana vine. Swiftly climbing a tree, he swung himself from branch to branch. Finally, he halted and gazed down. Beneath him lay the covered hole. But so well had Wangi done his job, it looked like firm ground.

Julo tied one end of the long vine to the branch high above the net-covered hole. Holding the other end, he sped back to the ground, and looped it over a branch, near the hidden edge of the net.

"Wangi," he whispered. "Hide on the far side of the hole. Wait for me. Soon I shall be back."

His chum opened his mouth, to ask what Julo meant. But before he could speak, Julo was speeding away, into the jungle. And he did not halt until, suddenly, he heard the sound of chattering and chortling voices.

Creeping stealthily forward, he parted the long grass. In a clearing, near the edge of the jungle, were the Raji raiders. Beyond them, on the shore, were their canoes . . . and the heavily-loaded cargo canoe.

Julo's eyes were grim. He had been right. Not all the raiders were sleeping. Two or three of them lay on their backs, awake, and gleefully planning the raid for that night. Had he and Wangi tried to

recover their canoe, they would have been caught!

He took a deep breath, steeled himself for what he was about to do, then—with a penetrating squeal, he thrashed about and beat the undergrowth!

From the Raji raiders came startled cries. In a moment they all were awake, leaping to their feet, snatching spears and bows. Julo, watching them intently through the screen of bamboos and thick grass, stamped and squealed even louder!

"It is a wild boar," came an excited yell from the raiders. "Quick, after it. We will have juicy pork to eat."

They hurled themselves in the direction of the furious squeals. Julo spun round, and crashed noisily away, leaving a trail of crushed undergrowth. Squealing, snorting and snarling exactly like a wild boar, he sped through the jungle.

Behind him chased the raiders. Wangi, waiting on the far side of the hidden hole, stiffened with anxiety as he heard the swiftly approaching uproar. Then, suddenly, from the jungle appeared Julo. Behind him, but not yet in sight, came the pursuers, chasing what they thought was a wild boar.

Julo panted to a halt, snatching at the end of the liana vine which he had hooked over a low branch. The pursuit was thundering down on him. Only a thinning screen of jungle wilderness hid him from the oncoming Raji raiders.

Seizing the vine, he hurled himself up the tree. Grasping the vine with a powerful grip, he leapt from a high branch.

Down and down he swung. Below him the ground sped dizzily past, and he glimpsed the scattering of leaves and twigs Wangi had skilfully covered over the net. He was swinging right over the hidden hole—without disturbing a single leaf or twig of the camouflage!

He carved a breath-taking passage through the air, right over the cleverly-concealed hole. Wangi, watching from behind a bush, gasped as Julo suddenly let go the vine. He was hurtling through the air. With a deft clutch, he swung himself on to a branch of a tree. Next moment, he was racing to the ground, to join Wangi behind the bush.

"Ah—here they come, Wangi! Watch!"

Even as Julo breathed his excited warning, from the far side of the hidden hole appeared the yelling pursuers of the "boar". In a bunch they sped forward . . .

Suddenly, the air was rent with wild howls and smothered shouts of terror. The ground beneath their feet gave way; and down they hurtled, wrapped in a tangle of net and branches, crashing in a mass of bodies on the hole's bottom.

"Quickly, Wangi," Julo cried. "Throw the rest of the net in on top of them. It will imprison them as they struggle to free themselves from its folds.

And while they are doing that we will dash to the beach. Hurry! There is not much time!"

They pulled away the stones pinioning the edges of the net and it slithered down on top of the struggling raiders at the bottom of the hole. They glimpsed the chums, and howls of fury filled the hole. But the two turned, and sped from sight.

Racing to the beach, leaving the raging, struggling raiders at the bottom of the leafy-floored hole, the chums set to work at terrific speed. Swiftly they unloaded the barrels of palm oil from the big cargo-carrying canoe.

Then, straining their muscles, they slowly slid the heavy craft over the sand, back into the water. Panting, they did not halt, but instantly struggled to reload it.

"Wangi," Julo gasped, wiping his perspiring face as they completed the reloading, "we will tow the raiders bark canoes away with us. Not only will it stop them coming after us, when they have escaped from the deep hole..."

"Yes, you're right," Wangi excitedly interrupted. "It will prevent them raiding our island, tonight! Good idea, Julo!"

Linking the raiders' six long bark canoes in line, one behind the other, at the stern of their own big canoe, they hoisted their rattan sail. Using their paddles to help the heavily-laden canoe to get under way, they soon were bowling steadily seaward, away from Copa and its dreaded perils.

"Now we are safe, Julo," Wangi breathed in relief. "Soon, now, we will reach Oola, and exchange our palm oil for the medicine, to make our warriors well again, quickly..."

He abruptly stopped. His eyes filled with dismay. Speeding round the far end of the atoll was a fast-moving canoe. It was manned by twelve powerful paddlers. The head-dresses told the chums who they were.

"They are Raji raiders," Julo gritted. "They must have been away from the main party. They have returned just in time to see us escaping from Copa, with the six canoes."

"And they are chasing us," Wangi groaned in a tone of anguish. "They will steal back our cargo. And, tonight, they will carry out their wicked plan, to raid our island."

JULO'S FIERY ARMADA-PLAN

THE long enemy canoe was slicing through the water, urged onward by its twelve powerful paddlers. Julo and Wangi bent to their own paddles, feverishly aiding the canoe as it sailed along under its rattan sail.

"It is no good," Wangi gasped, his body running with perspiration. "We are slower than the raiders in their canoe."

Julo did not reply. Still paddling with all his

strength, his gaze darted from their pursuers. It fastened on a piece of drift wood, which was being swept along in the clasp of one of the strange currents which raced towards Copa.

A desperate plan flashed across his mind. At all costs he must beat the Raji raiders, get to Oola with the palm oil before the trade ship left, and hurry back with the medicine. And not only the cure of the sick warriors depended on him, now. So, also, did the safety of all on the island.

"If my scheme works," he fiercely whispered to himself, "It means the end of the raiders' plan to swoop on our island."

"Wangi," he suddenly yelled. "Quickly, paddle as hard as you can . . . harder than ever you've paddled before."

The startled Wangi wasted no time asking questions. Putting his trust in his pal, he dug in his paddle and bent his back with the strength of each swift and sturdy stroke.

Behind them the canoe of devil raiders hissed through the blue sea. Surprised yells volleyed from its crew as they suddenly saw the big cargo canoe change course. Instead of continuing seaward, it was tacking parallel with Copa.

Instantly, the howling pursuers veered their canoe. As it bore down towards the heavily-laden craft they were directly between their prey and the island.

"Wangi," Julo rapped. "Keep paddling the canoe in a straight course."

As he spoke, Julo dropped his own paddle, leapt to the sail and tore it down. Wangi gasped in astonishment, but did as Julo had bid.

At furious speed, Julo got to work. Quickly he snapped off a short piece of the rattan sail's spar. Then, dashing up to one end of the big canoe he got out the flint and tinder that were always kept there in a special watertight compartment. Within a few seconds he had the tinder glowing red—and then he held it to the piece of spar he had broken off, and began to blow at it.

His eyes gleamed with satisfaction, as a wisp of smoke curled from the pieces of wood. Gathering the sun-warmed rattan sail in front of him, he stooped and blew gently.

"Hurry, Wangi, and pull in the six bark canoes," he snapped between puffs.

Leaning over the stern, Wangi hauled in the line of canoes until they were close-hauled alongside their own craft. This was now almost at a standstill. Then, Wangi gasped in fear and dismay.

Their craft was drifting backwards.

It was drifting towards the racing pursuers. He gasped a warning to Julo, who now had blown a flame from his stick.

"I know," came Julo's steady reply. "It is what I planned. See, Wangi, I steered our canoe

into the fast current which is carrying us backward. Now—you will see why I did it."

With an effort Wangi repressed a cry of horror as he saw Julo thrust the flaming sticks into the rattan sail. Almost at once the flames began to race the length and breadth of the dry straw-like sail.

But as they did, so Julo leapt to his feet, ignoring the rush of heat and flame, and snatched up the blazing sail. Quickly, he stepped to the side of the canoe. Wangi saw him throw the flaming mass over the three bark canoes, alongside.

Then, in a flash, Julo slashed through the liana vine which was towing the canoes. As he did so, the swift current seized them, and swept them away.

Then, at last, Wangi understood his chum's daring scheme; and he let out a yell of wonder as he saw its effects.

But Wangi's yell was drowned by the sudden howls of rage and fear which broke from the throats of the raiders.

Their cries and roars of triumph, as they bore down on their victim, were abruptly changed to bellows of terror.

Sweeping towards them came the armada of flaming bark canoes. In a crescent of fire the three blazing craft, closed in front and on either side of their own canoe. So near had they been they now had no chance to turn aside, or turn round and escape.

Flames roaring around them, they made desperate attempts to push the blazing canoes away with their paddles—but they, too, caught fire. In a matter of moments their own bark canoe was bursting into flame.

"Wangi, be ready for them!" Julo roared as the raiders dived overboard into the sea.

From his belt Julo drew his sheath knife. Wangi did the same. Julo hauled in the liana vine. He had a use for that.

One by one the raiders surfaced. As they did so, they made for the only craft remaining afloat and safe . . . the chums'.

From the canoe, Julo eyed them grimly, his knife held threateningly in his grasp.

"We will let you come aboard one at a time," he called to them. "You cannot swim back to Copa. It is too far. Do as I order and we will save you from drowning. Let your headman speak for you."

"Gug-gug . . ." the headman spluttered. "We will obey you. But let us come aboard quickly. There may be sharks about."

"You first," Julo snapped at him.

The headman did not argue. Grasping the gunwale, he made to haul himself aboard. But

instantly, Julo dropped a loop of tough liana vine over his wrist and in a flash he had tied the wrist on a short length of vine to the gunwale.

"Now you can climb aboard," he commanded.

Sullenly the headman obeyed, to find himself a prisoner with one wrist securely hitched to the side of the canoe.

One by one Julo allowed five more to board the canoe. Each, in turn, was hitched to the side of the canoe, one behind the other.

Then Julo ordered the remaining six Raji raiders to swim to the other side of the canoe. Each in turn was allowed to climb aboard, and each was treated like those on the other side of the canoe.

When, at last, all were aboard, they were haltered by one wrist each down the length of the canoe. And since the tough liana vine ran from man to man without a break, none of the prisoners could untie himself!

"Good," Julo grinned at Wangi. "Now give each of them one of the paddles which the canoe carries for its usual crew. We make them paddle us to Oola!"

Julo darted a glance up at the sun. It was now moving down towards the horizon.

"We paddle fast," he snapped. "We will reach Oola before the sun goes to its sleep. Now . . . all together—paddle!"

The heavy canoe began to move. In a few moments it was speeding along, the twelve paddlers sending it forward at a speed greater than when it was being carried under sail.

"They are a fine crew," Wangi chortled, and Julo grinned back at him, then uttered a cry of joy.

On the horizon was Oola. And soon, the island came fully into sight; and there, at anchor, was the trade ship.

The trade ship's crew gathered along its side as the big canoe sped alongside. The captain stared down at the roped paddlers, then eyed Julo and Wangi in wonder.

"Hey, what goes on?" he yelled in astonishment.

In a few brief words Julo called back an explanation.

As Julo ended, the captain's eyes glowed in admiration.

"By jingo," he roared. "You've swept the islands free of the menace of these Raji raiders."

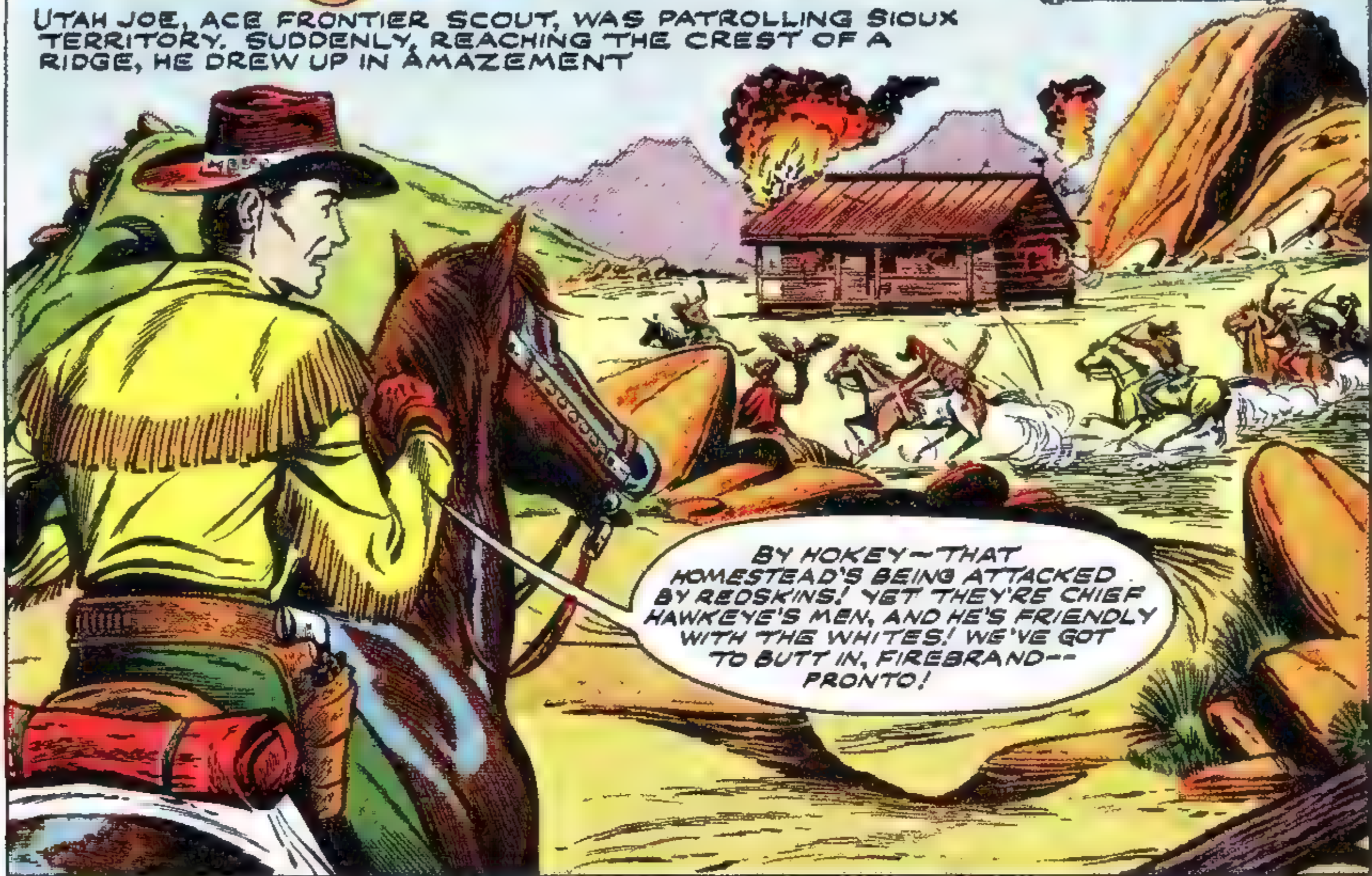
"We've brought you palm oil to barter for medicine for our sick warriors," Julo hastened to explain as he mounted to the ship's deck. "Quickly we must return to our island."

"And quickly you shall," the captain warmly replied. "You deserve a reward for all you've done today! I'm sailing to your island, right away, and your Chief shall have the medicine—free!"

UTAH JOE AND THE MAGIC EAGLES

BY HENRY GAMLIN

UTAH JOE, ACE FRONTIER SCOUT, WAS PATROLLING SIOUX TERRITORY. SUDDENLY, REACHING THE CREST OF A RIDGE, HE DREW UP IN AMAZEMENT



JOE'S WHIRLWIND ARRIVAL BROUGHT A GASP OF RAGE FROM THE SIOUX MEDICINE MAN.

'TIS THE UTAH SCOUT! HE COMES TO THE WHITE MEN'S AID. YET SHALL THEY BE DRIVEN FROM THE LAND. I, BLACK RATTLER, HAVE SPOKEN!

FEARING THE FAMOUS UTAH JOE, THE INDIANS RETREATED. AND A FEW MINUTES LATER, IN THE SMALL HOMESTEAD --

YOU SURE ARE WELCOME, UTAH! THE REDSKINS ARE GETTING MIGHTY TROUBLESOME IN THESE PARTS

IT'S THEIR MEDICINE MAN, BLACK RATTLER, WHO STIRS 'EM UP

HE'S A NO-GOOD SKUNK WHO CARRIES A TAME EAGLE AROUND WITH HIM. THE INDIANS THINK IT'S BIG MAGIC

AN EAGLE? HAW!

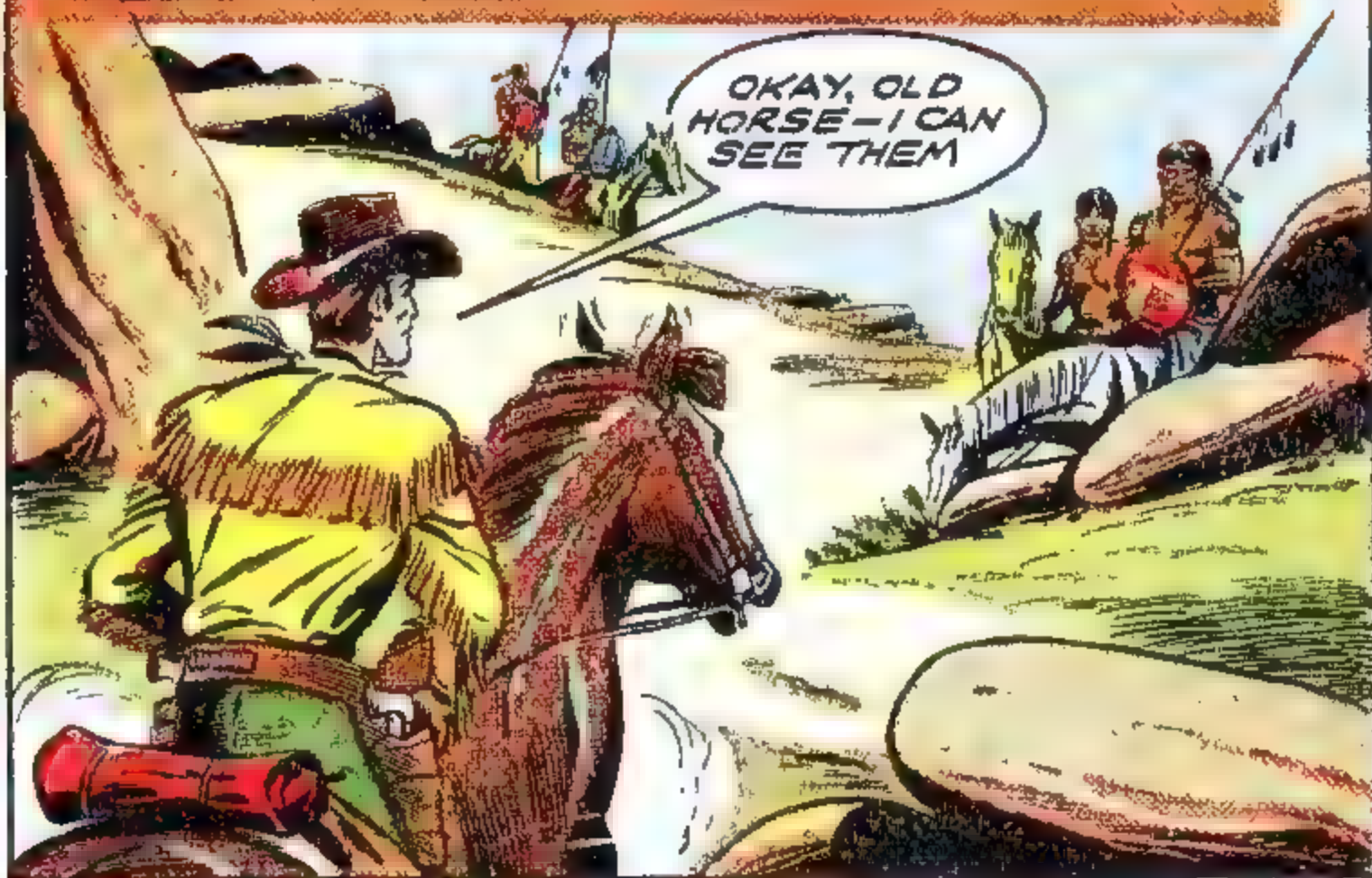
SAY-- WAIT A MINUTE! THE EAGLE'S THE BIG TOTEM SPIRIT OF HAWKEYE'S TRIBE -- AND THOSE INDIANS WERE HAWKEYE'S MEN!

THEY'LL THINK THAT HE CAN SPEAK TO THE TOTEM SPIRIT THROUGH THE EAGLE, AND THEY'LL DO WHATEVER HE SAYS

UTAH JOE DECIDED TO SET OFF AT ONCE ON FIREBRAND, HIS FAITHFUL HORSE

LEAVE THIS TO ME, FOLKS. HAWKEYE'S AN OLD FRIEND OF MINE. GUESS I'LL RIDE UP AND SEE HIM. UNLESS BLACK RATTLER IS DEALT WITH, THESE RAIDS MAY DEVELOP INTO REAL WARFARE!

THE TRAIL TO HAWKEYE'S CAMP WAS QUIET AND ALMOST DESERTED, BUT AS JOE GOT NEARER, FIREBRAND'S EARS TWITCHED WARNINGLY



OKAY, OLD HORSE—I CAN SEE THEM

UTAH JOE FOUND THE CHIEF SQUATTING GLOOMILY AT THE ENTRANCE TO A TEPEE



HAIL, GREAT CHIEF! SAY, NOW— WHY DO YOU SIT ALONE AND SAD?

GREETINGS, PALEFACE! LONG HAVE I WATCHED FOR YOUR COMING, THAT WE MIGHT TALK

WITHOUT WASTE OF TIME, UTAH JOE STERNLY DEMANDED TO KNOW WHY CHIEF HAWKEYE'S MEN HAD BEEN ATTACKING THE SETTLERS



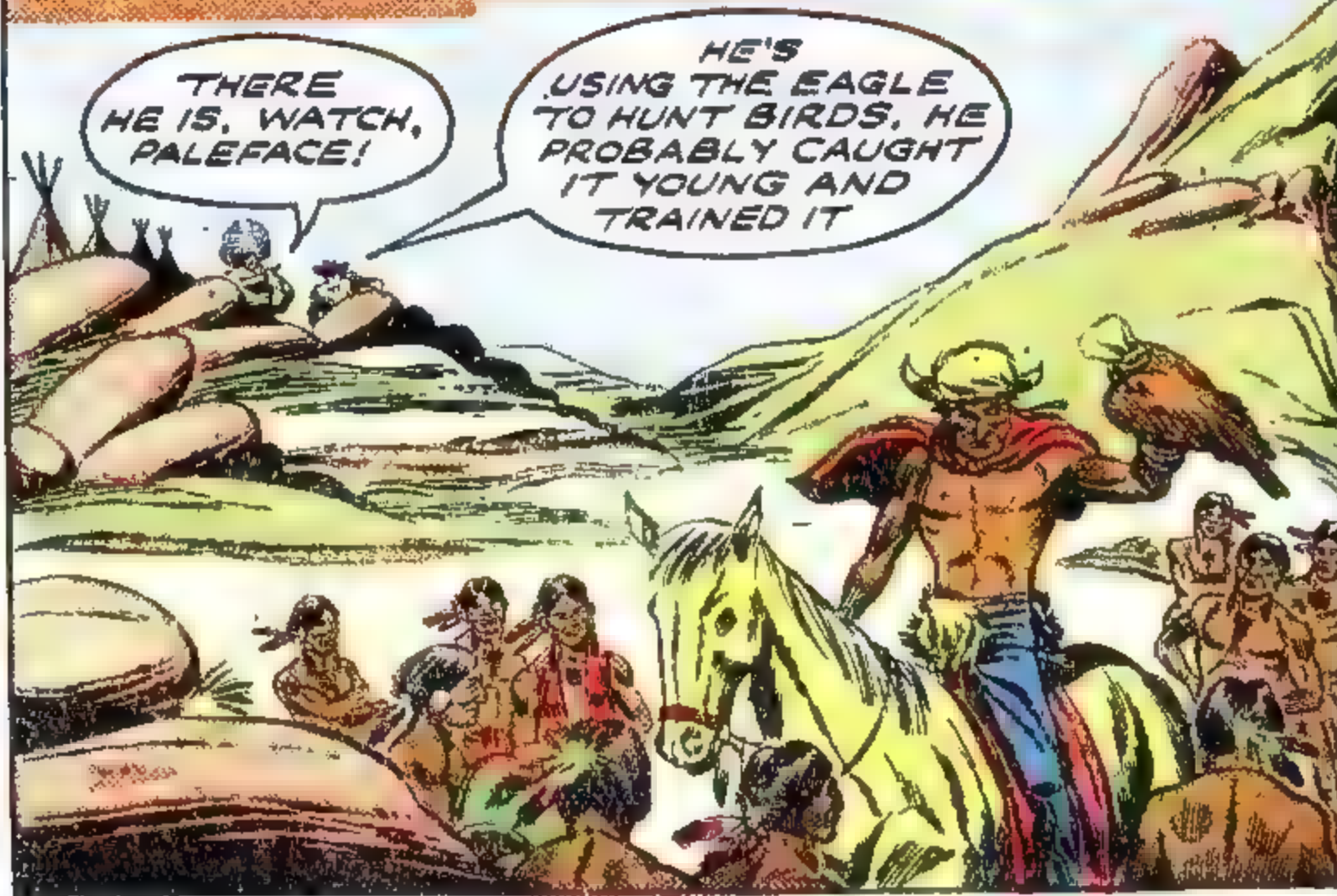
THIS IS BAD MEDICINE, O CHIEF—IT WILL BRING WAR AND DEATH TO YOUR PEOPLE AND MINE!

WHAT POWER HAVE I AGAINST THE GREAT MAGIC OF BLACK RATTLER? ALL MEN NOW LOOK TO HIM AS LEADER OF THE SIOUX. MY BRAVES FEAR HIM, AND WILL GO TO WAR AT HIS COMMAND. DOES HE NOT SPEAK WITH THE SPIRIT OF THE EAGLE TOTEM?



COME—YOU SHALL SEE HOW BLACK RATTLER AND THE EAGLE ARE AS BROTHERS!

CHIEF HAWKEYE LED THE WAY TO THE EDGE OF THE VILLAGE

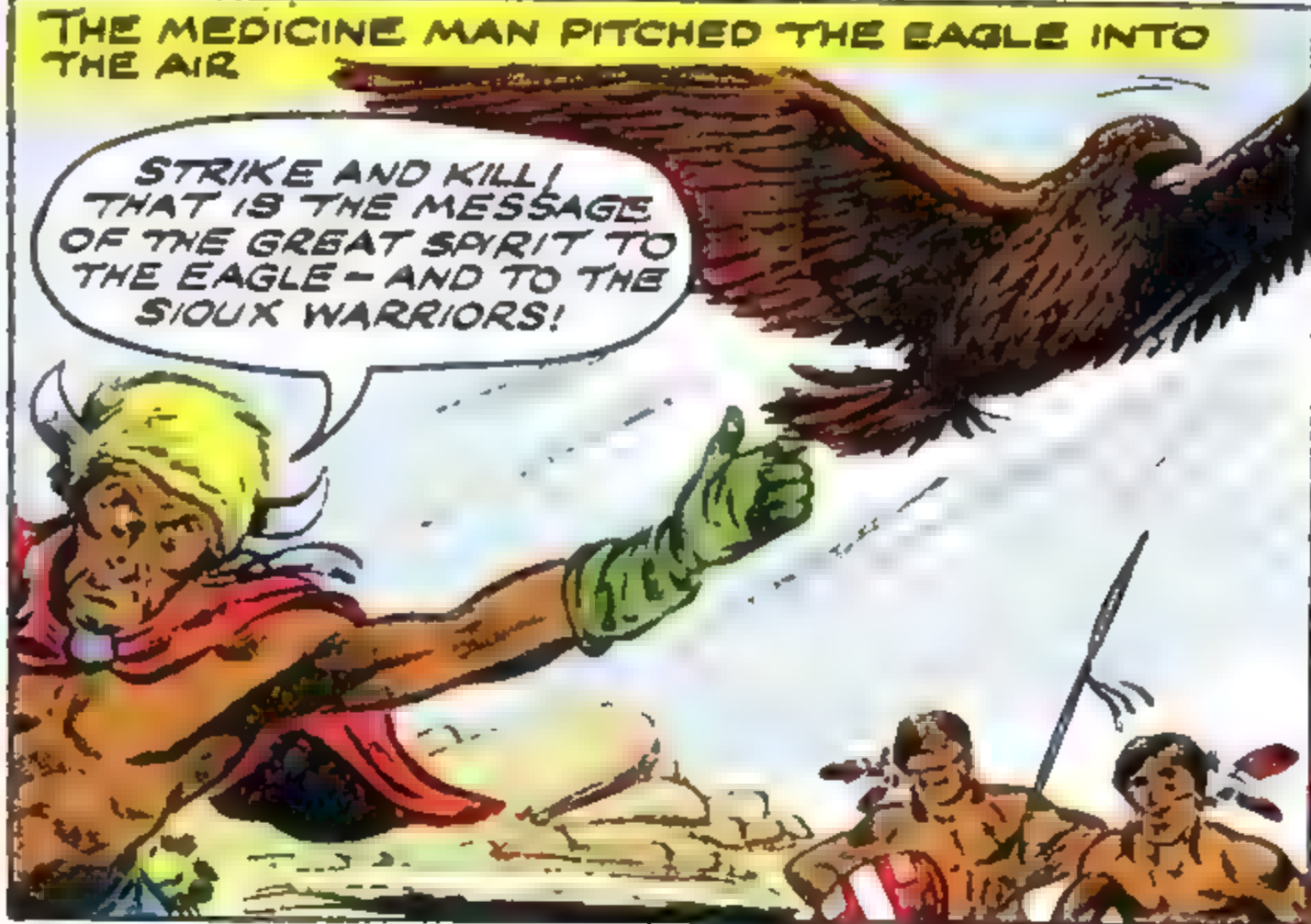


THERE HE IS, WATCH, PALEFACE!

HE'S USING THE EAGLE TO HUNT BIRDS, HE PROBABLY CAUGHT IT YOUNG AND TRAINED IT

THE MEDICINE MAN PITCHED THE EAGLE INTO THE AIR

STRIKE AND KILL!
THAT IS THE MESSAGE
OF THE GREAT SPIRIT TO
THE EAGLE - AND TO THE
SIOUX WARRIORS!



SECONDS LATER, THE NEEDLE-SHARP TALONS OF THE EAGLE CLOSED ON A TERRIFIED BIRD

WAH-THIS
IS A GREAT
MAGIC!

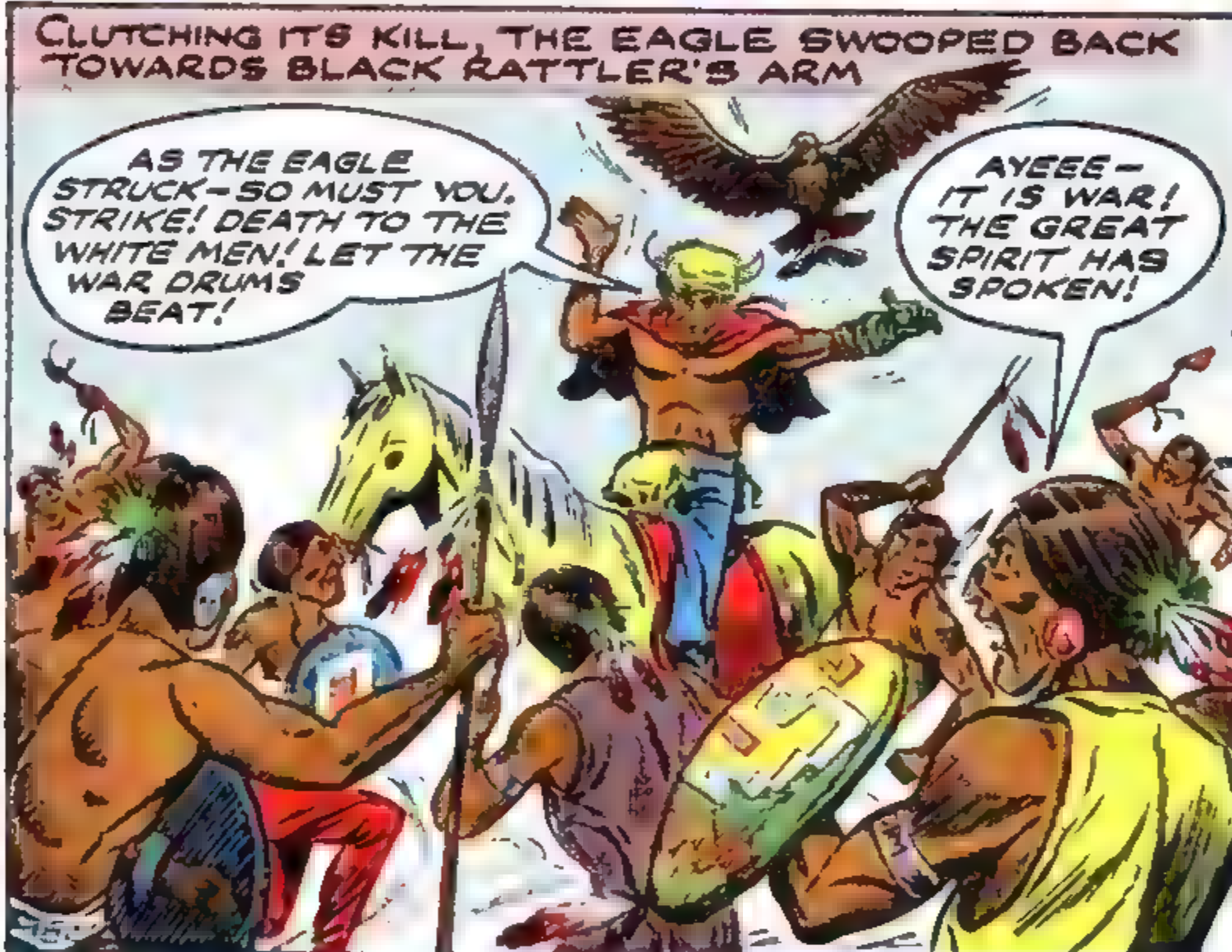
THE MESSAGE
IS CLEAR-WE TAKE
THE WAR-PATH!



CLUTCHING ITS KILL, THE EAGLE SWOOPED BACK TOWARDS BLACK RATTLER'S ARM

AS THE EAGLE
STRUCK-SO MUST YOU,
STRIKE! DEATH TO THE
WHITE MEN! LET THE
WAR DRUMS
BEAT!

AYEEE-
IT IS WAR!
THE GREAT
SPIRIT HAS
SPOKEN!



WITH FEAR SHOWING IN HIS FACE, CHIEF HAWKEYE TURNED TO UTAH JOE

SUCH IS THE
MAGIC OF BLACK
RATTLER. IT WILL BE
WAR, AND I CAN DO
NOTHING

MAGIC?
SHUCKS! IN OLDEN
TIMES THEY CALLED
IT HAWKING! BUT
WE'VE GOT TO ACT-
AND FAST!



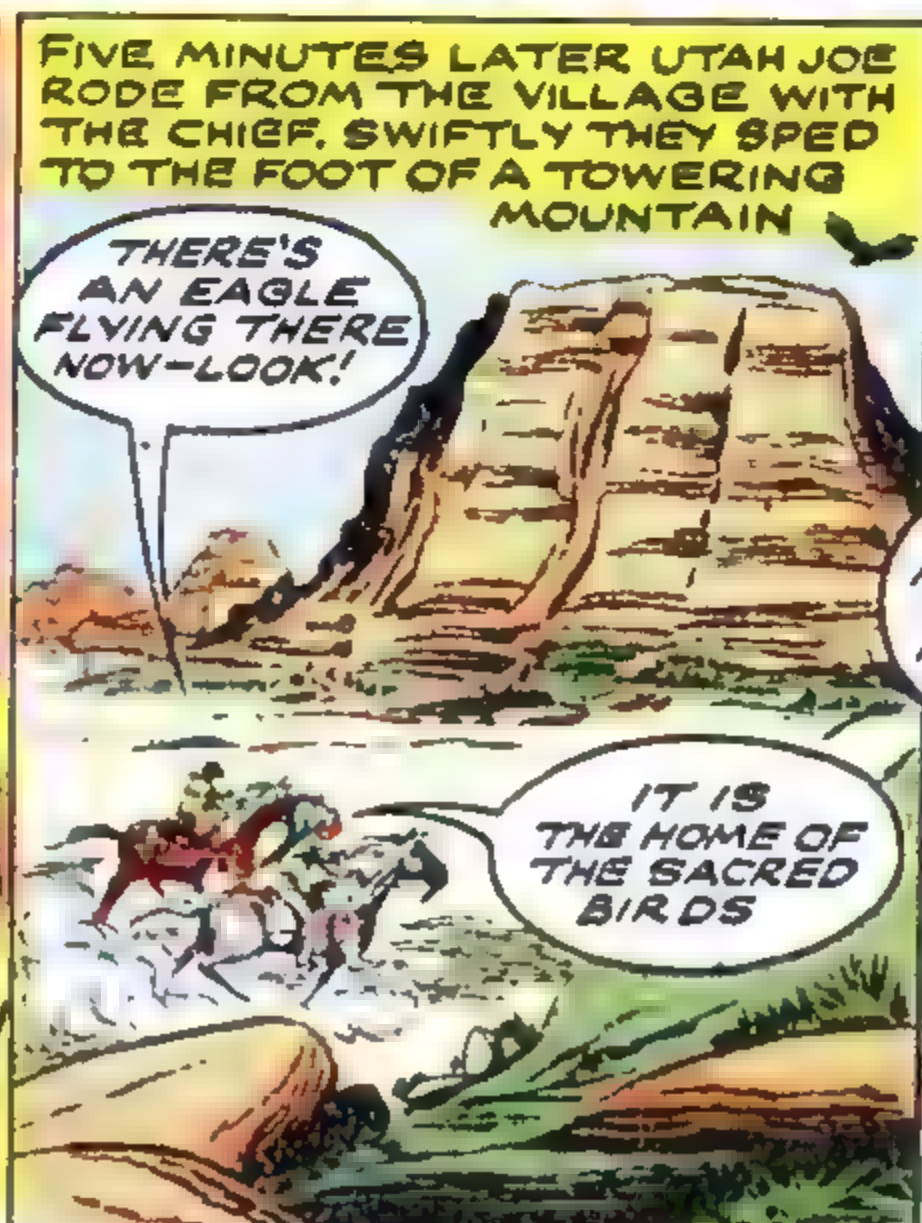
SAY-I'VE GOT
A GREAT IDEA!
LISTEN TO ME,
O CHIEF-



FIVE MINUTES LATER UTAH JOE
RODE FROM THE VILLAGE WITH
THE CHIEF. SWIFTLY THEY SPED
TO THE FOOT OF A TOWERING
MOUNTAIN

THERE'S
AN EAGLE
FLYING THERE
NOW-LOOK!

IT IS
THE HOME OF
THE SACRED
BIRDS



FARTHER UP THE SLOPES, CHIEF
HAWKEYE REINED IN HIS PONY

I MUST
LEAVE YOU
HERE, THE SIGNS
SAY THAT NO
INDIAN MAY GO
FURTHER-

EXCEPT
BLACK
RATTLER!



THE CHIEF POINTED TO AN UNTIDY MASS OF STICKS AND GRASSES BUILT HIGH UP ON A ROCKY CRAG

BEHOLD WHAT YOU ARE SEEKING - AN EAGLE'S NEST WITH YOUNG BIRDS IN IT!

GOOD! RETURN IN HASTE TO YOUR VILLAGE, O CHIEF, AND SOON YOU SHALL SEE GREATER MAGIC THAN BLACK RATTLER'S!

WITH MY MAGIC I SHALL DESTROY BLACK RATTLER'S POWER. THEN ONCE AGAIN, YOU, HAWKEYE, SHALL BE TREATED AS CHIEF!

FAREWELL, MY BROTHER

UTAH JOE LED HIS HORSE UP A STEEP PATH

IT'S MY GUESS THAT BLACK RATTLER TOOK HIS EAGLE FROM THIS NEST LAST YEAR - AND WHAT HE DID WE CAN DO, EH, FIREBRAND?

AND THIS IS WHERE YOU HELP ME, PARDNER, BY STANDING STEADY. DON'T YOU MOVE!

WITH ONE END OF HIS LARIAT TIED TO FIREBRAND'S SADDLE-HORN, JOE LOWERED HIMSELF DOWN THE ROCK FACE TO THE EAGLE'S NEST BELOW

WITH BEATING WINGS AND SQUAWKS OF RAGE, THE PARENT BIRDS SWEEP IN TO ATTACK!

HEY-KEEP OFF! I ONLY WANT TO BORROW YOUR YOUNG 'UNS!

MANAGING SOMEHOW TO PROTECT HIMSELF FROM THE TERRIBLE TALONS AND CRUEL BEAKS, UTAH JOE STUFFED THE EAGLETS INSIDE HIS BUCKSKIN SHIRT

IF I TUCK 'EM OUT OF SIGHT, THE PARENT BIRDS'LL MESS UP STOP ATTACKING ME. BUT THEY'LL HEAR THE CHICKS AND KEEP CLOSE



UTAH JOE WAS RIGHT! THE PARENT BIRDS FOLLOWED THE SOUND OF THE EAGLETS' CRIES AS THE SCOUT BEGAN THE PERILOUS JOURNEY BACK TO THE PATH

DON'T YOU BUDGE, FIREBRAND-I'M ON MY WAY



HIS MUSCLES RIPPLING UNDER THE STRAIN, JOE DRAGGED HIMSELF BACK ON TO THE LEDGE

HEY, YOU CHICKS! QUIT SCUFFLING AROUND DOWN THERE-- YOUR CLAWS ARE A SIGHT TOO SHARP!



SUDDENLY A DREADED SOUND FLOATED UP FROM THE PLAINS BELOW

WAR DRUMS! BLACK RATTLER IS USING HIS EAGLE TO RALLY THE TRIBES AGAINST THE WHITES! WE'VE GOT TO HURRY, FIREBRAND!



UTAH JOE HEADED FOR THE VILLAGE OF CHIEF HAWKEYE, WITH THE PARENT EAGLES STILL FOLLOWING

KEEP RIGHT BEHIND ME, YOU TWO! THIS MAGIC IS SURE GOING TO SCARE BLACK RATTLER



MEANWHILE, IN THE INDIAN VILLAGE, THE MEDICINE MAN AND THE BRAVES WERE WHIRLING AND LEAPING IN A SAVAGE TRIBAL WAR DANCE

THE SPIRITS HAVE SPOKEN! DEATH TO THE WHITE MEN AND DESTRUCTION TO THEIR HOMES!

AHEEE-STRIKE AND KILL! THAT IS THE MESSAGE OF THE EAGLE TOTEM!



THE DRUMS FELL SILENT, AND AT A SIGNAL FROM THE MEDICINE MAN, THE YELLING BRAVES RAN FOR THEIR PONIES AND STREAMED FROM THE VILLAGE. THEY HALTED AT THE BASE OF A HUGE ROCK WHICH BLACK RATTLER MOUNTED, ACCOMPANIED BY CHIEF HAWKEYE

LISTEN TO MY WORDS, SIOUX WARRIORS! I WOULD SPEAK WITH YOU BEFORE YOU RIDE AGAINST THE HATED PALEFACES!



SUDDENLY CHIEF HAWKEYE BROKE IN WITH A LOUD CRY

WAIT! I SEE OTHER MESSENGERS FROM THE SPIRITS APPROACHING! LET US HEAR THEIR TALK!



SHOUTS OF AMAZEMENT AROSE FROM THE SIOUX WARRIORS

THE CHIEF SPEAKS TRUTH - LET US WAIT

THE WHITE MAN BRINGS TWO EAGLES

BLACK RATTLER HAS ONLY ONE! THIS IS A GREATER MAGIC!



UTAH JOE DISMOUNTED AND FACED THE MEDICINE MAN

BEHOLD, EVIL ONE, I AM HERE WITH THE SACRED EAGLES FROM THE HEIGHTS. THEY ARE MORE POWERFUL BY FAR THAN THINE!



AT UTAH JOE'S NEXT WORDS, THE MEDICINE MAN LEAPT FORWARD WITH A HOWL OF FURY

BECAUSE OF YOUR HATRED FOR THE WHITE MEN YOU WOULD BRING DEATH TO YOUR PEOPLE AND MINE AND TREACHERY TO YOUR CHIEF!



YOU LIE, WHITE DOG

VICIOUSLY THE MEDICINE MAN STRUCK OUT WITH HIS TOMAHAWK, BUT UTAH JOE DODGED THE GLEAMING BLADE, SNATCHED BLACK RATTLER'S EAGLE, AND WHIPPED OFF THE BIRD'S HOOD

BACK TO YOUR PARENTS, LOST ONE, AND AWAY FROM THE THIEF WHO STOLE YOU FROM THE NEST!



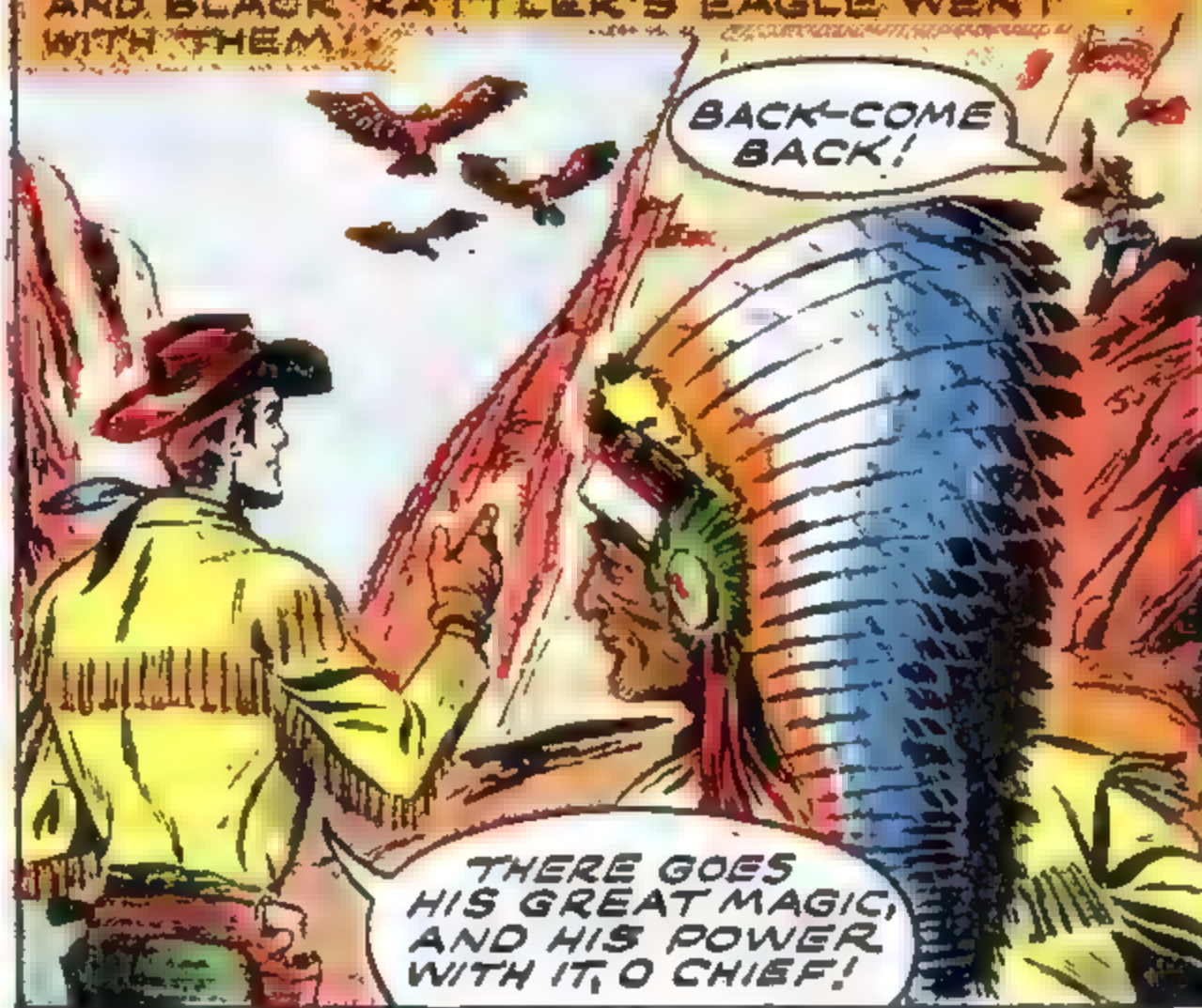
AS BLACK RATTLER'S EAGLE SOARED ALOFT, UTAH JOE DARTED BEHIND A NEARBY ROCK AND REMOVED THE EAGLE CHICKS FROM HIS SHIRT

SO LONG, YOUNGSTERS, AND THANKS! MUM AND DAD'LL TAKE YOU HOME



GRASPING THE EAGLETS SAFELY IN THEIR TALONS, THE PARENT BIRDS SOARED UP TO THEIR EYRIE IN THE MOUNTAIN HEIGHTS -- AND BLACK RATTLER'S EAGLE WENT WITH THEM

BACK-COME BACK!



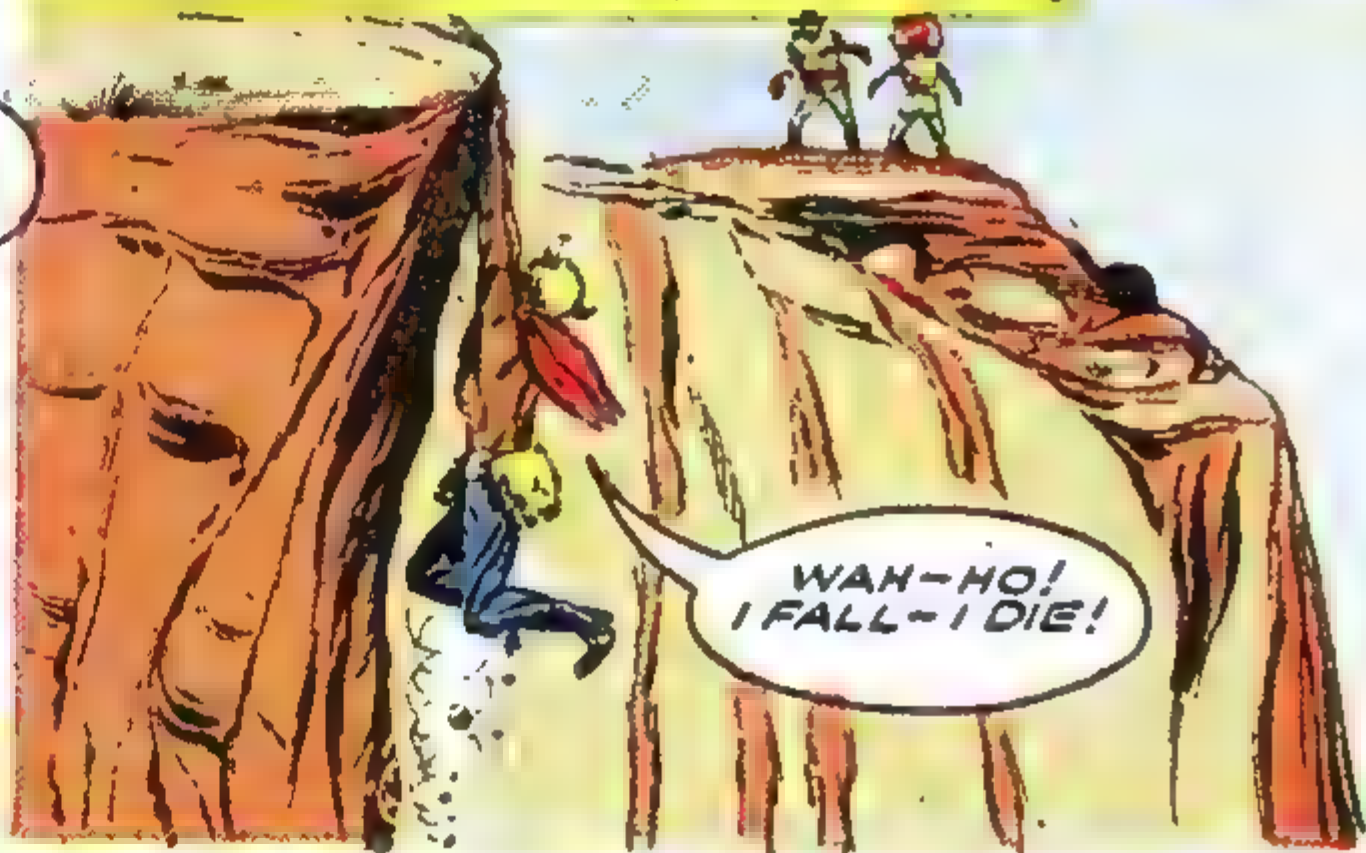
THERE GOES HIS GREAT MAGIC, AND HIS POWER WITH IT, O CHIEF!

UTAH JOE THEN ADDRESSED THE ASSEMBLED BRAVES--AND THEY LISTENED IN FEAR AND TREMBLING AT THE WHITE MAN WHO SEEMED TO CONTROL THE SACRED EAGLES.

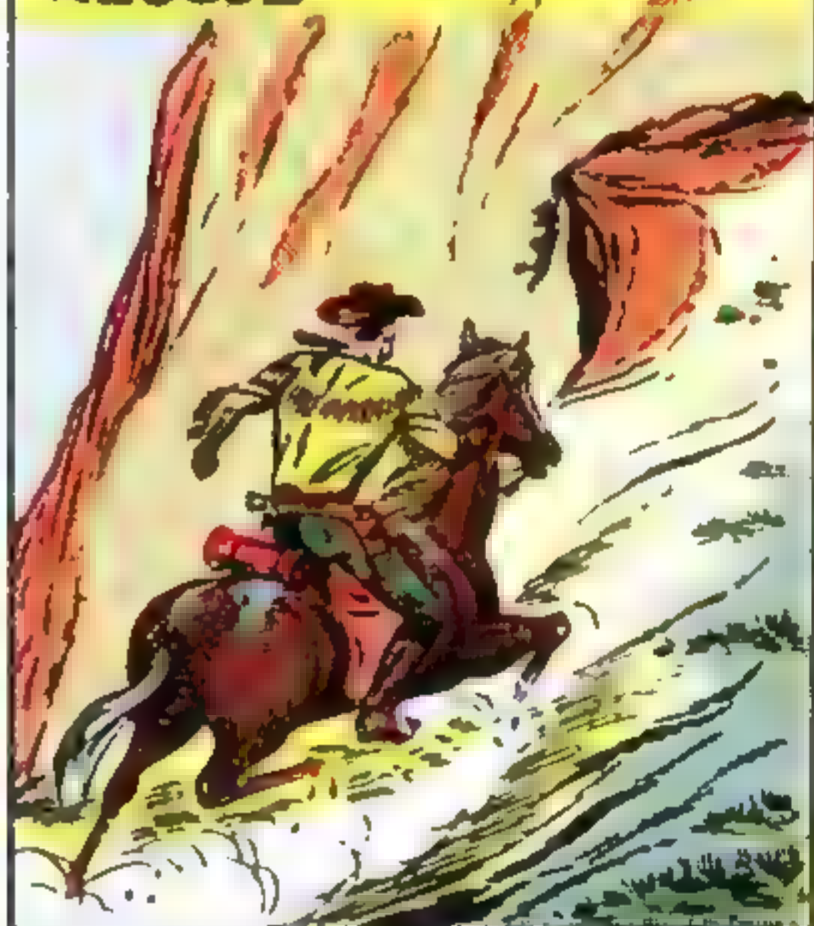
THE PALEFACES WISH YOU NO HARM, THEY WANT TO LIVE IN PEACE WITH YOU ALL. BELIEVE NOT THE EVIL WORDS OF BLACK RATTLER. HE IS A SNAKE IN THE GRASS WHO HAS TRICKED YOU ALL!



MEANWHILE, FRANTICALLY CHASING HIS EAGLE, BLACK RATTLER HAD MISSED HIS FOOTING! YELLING IN PANIC, HE HUNG BY HIS FINGERS OVER A TERRIBLE DROP!



WITHIN A MATTER OF SECONDS, UTAH JOE WAS GALLOPING TO HIS RESCUE.



THE FAMOUS SCOUT SEIZED BLACK RATTLER'S WRISTS, AND HAULED HIM UP TO SAFETY.

NOW YOU'RE COMING RIGHT OVER TO PAY HOMAGE TO CHIEF HAWKEYE.



AND A FEW MINUTES LATER--

BEHOLD HOW THE TREACHEROUS DOG KNEELS TO YOUR MIGHTY CHIEF! SAY NOW--IS IT WAR OR PEACE? WHO IS FOR CHIEF HAWKEYE, AND WHO FOR BLACK RATTLER?

IT IS PEACE! AWAY WITH BLACK RATTLER! WOE TO THE TRAITOR!



AND SO THE SHADOW OF WAR BETWEEN REDMAN AND WHITE WAS LIFTED, AND THE PIPE OF PEACE PASSED AGAIN--FROM HAWKEYE, CHIEF OF THE SIOUX, TO UTAH JOE, FRONTIER SCOUT.

ONCE MORE, O CHIEF, I CAN REALLY CALL YOU THE WHITE MAN'S BROTHER!

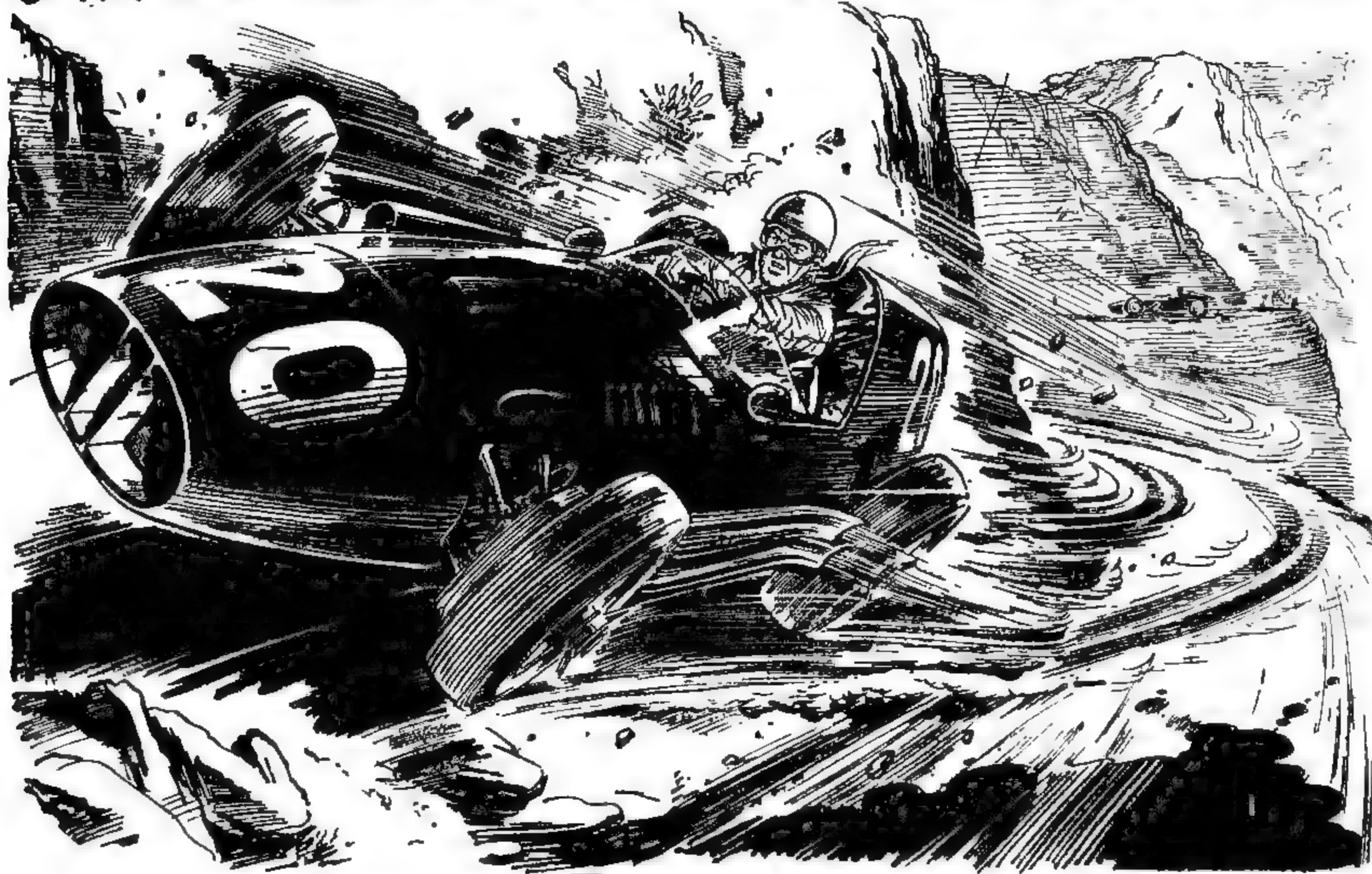
NONE IS THERE AMONG US WHO CAN EQUAL THE WHITE MAN'S MAGIC! IT IS PEACE FOR ALL TIME!



THE END

DRIVER OF THE **CYCLONE SPECIAL**

BY
DEREK
KNIGHT



THE PLOT TO RUIN HIS RIVAL

“**B**RRRRRRMPH!”

Down the wide concrete runway of the disused airfield, the squat green racing car thundered at breath-taking speed. As the driver flicked into top gear, the deep note of the exhaust was almost deafening.

The great car was now moving at close to a hundred and eighty miles an hour, held down to the track only by the tremendous downward air-pressure on its scuttle-shaped cowl.

It passed the watchers on the edge of the strip in a blur of speed and rocketed across the finishing tapes.

Roger Gray took the sheet of scribbled figures from the technician in charge of the electronic timing-tapes and studied them with a low whistle of satisfaction.

“Three seconds inside the lap record, Mr. Holmere,” he said, turning to the tall, grey-haired man who had come up to him. “This new Cyclone Special is the goods, sir.

“With Barry at the wheel, we’re certain to win the Montefiore next month.”

A faint smile crossed the face of Holmere, to be replaced quickly by a look of careworn anxiety.

“I hope you’re right,” he sighed, and added half to himself, “I don’t think any of you quite realise just how much depends on this car.”

Meanwhile a cluster of mechanics in white overalls were running out to meet the Cyclone Special as it coasted back after making its record-breaking trial.

In the cockpit a tall, fair-haired man had whipped off his racing-visor and was easing himself out of the cramped driving-seat. With a friendly pat on the shoulder of Stuart Kaye, the veteran chief mechanic, he walked smiling across to Holmere.

“I think she’ll do, boss,” he said quietly. “She needs a few minor adjustments to the fuel injection system and the suspension tightening—and then we should be ready for the big slambang at Montefiore.”

“Okay, Barry,” nodded Holmere gravely. “Now get yourself cleaned up, and come to my office. I’ve got something important to tell you and Gray.”

“Give me five minutes and we’ll be there, Mr.

A Breathless Battle Against Tremendous Odds to Win the Speedsters’ Championship

Holmere," grinned Barry, and walked away with a cheerful whistle.

John Holmere threw a respectful gaze at the receding figure of the quiet-spoken man with the ice-cold nerves and magical hands.

For in the course of two years, Barry Zane had carried the Holmere panther crest to the forefront of the car-racing world.

He was top race-driver for the small Holmere firm whose latest product, the Cyclone Special, had now reached the stage of final trials after years of patient planning.

Out of loyalty to John Holmere, who had first discovered him and given him his chance, Barry had turned down many tempting offers from the wealthy Continental manufacturers to drive for them.

Now he was reaching the peak of his career. Assisted by his co-driver and best friend, Roger Gray, he had already won two of the major Grand Prix events on the motor racing calendar.

At the moment he was tying on points with the fabulous Pietro Carlotti, top driver of the famous Italian Masari firm, for first place in the world's race-driving championship. Everything depended now on the result of the forthcoming Montefiore Grand Prix.

It would be a stern task. For the Montefiore was practically Carlotti's home circuit.

The veteran Italian knew every twist and turn of the tortuous course which ran through the mountains and across the sun-baked plains of Southern Italy.

Half an hour later Barry and Roger, washed and changed, filed into Holmere's office and stood expectantly before his desk. Holmere set down a sheaf of papers and looked up at them grimly.

"Well, this is it—straight from the shoulders, boys," he began abruptly. "You may as well know—all this work on the new Special model has cost money, big money. Everything depends on us winning the Montefiore."

"You can rely on us doing our best, boss," said Barry, frowning. "But I don't quite get it. We've already won two Grand Prix events, how can one more race be so important to the company?"

"I'll tell you why, Barry," replied Holmere. "As you know, our workshops have been turning out road versions of last year's car for the export market. And recently a big American buyer wrote that he's ready to place an order with us for two hundred cars, provided . . ." he paused, then added significantly, ". . . we win the Montefiore!"

"I see," murmured Barry thoughtfully. "Everybody knows the Montefiore is about the toughest race on the schedule. If we win—what an advertisement! We'd be sure to get that order."

"Exactly," Mr. Holmere nodded. "It's the only

way we can get back the money we've spent on developing the Cyclone Special. Otherwise boys, we'll probably have to go out of business!"

Barry and Roger eyed each other with dismay. Then, prompted by the same thought, they turned back to their employer.

"Roger and I have a few hundred pounds salted away, boss," Barry began eagerly. "They're yours for the asking. And you can forget our retaining fees till the tide turns again . . ."

"Thanks, boys," Holmere cut in huskily, touched by their loyalty, "but it wouldn't help. We need more than that—much more."

"Let's just leave it at that. If you win the Montefiore then we all keep our jobs. If not—the Holmere banner disappears from the race-circuits!"

As he spoke Holmere put out his hand and sadly picked up a statuette from the table. It was the famous yellow Holmere Panther, whose crest Barry and Roger had carried to victory on many hard-fought occasions.

"Don't worry, boss," Barry said, suddenly determined as never before, "I believe the new Cyclone Special is going to be the best car in the racing business. And, by thunder, I'll prove it by bringing her in first across that Montefiore finishing line!"

But as the two drivers turned to leave, Barry's face lined with a thoughtful frown. Experience had taught him the many hazards of the modern Grand Prix.

Each year the going became tougher. Competition between the rival firms was so deadly, the strain on machines and drivers so heavy, that there was no margin for even the most trifling error of judgment.

Barry opened the office-door and stepped out—almost to stumble over a stooping figure, just straightening up in the doorway.

It was Joe Saggars, former official race-driver of the Holmere company, until Barry's meteoric rise on the track had led to his replacement.

Saggars was a burly, wide-shouldered man with a thin mouth and rather shifty eyes. He gave the two track-men a flustered smile.

"Steady on, you blokes," he said breezily. "I was just opening the door when you barged out on me like a rugger scrum!"

"Okay, Saggars," Barry snapped curtly, his gaze icy. "The old man's clear now. You can go right in!"

"I've a hunch Saggars was listening at that door," Barry muttered as they left the building. "I never did trust that fellow somehow. I wonder what he's up to?"

"Oh, he's harmless enough," Roger shrugged. "He still owes you and the boss a grudge for losing

his place in the driving team—but there's nothing he can do about it, so why worry?"

"I dare say you're right, Roger," replied Barry, brightening up. "Let's go over to the workshops and see how Stuart Kaye's making out with the Cyclone."

But if Barry could have seen Saggars later that day he might not have dismissed the vengeful ex-driver from his mind so lightly.

In a luxurious office in the nearby town of Milchester, Saggars sat in low-toned conversation with a sallow-faced middle-aged man. The latter was Ambrose Pascal, a wealthy manufacturer who had been trying for a long time to get control of the Holmere company.

"Honest, Mr. Pascal," Saggars was saying, "I was there at the trials this morning. This new Cyclone Special is a winner! It's as fast as any of the Continental makes—and the acceleration is terrific!"

Then he went on to describe what he had overheard while eavesdropping outside Holmere's office-door that morning.

"So Holmere's in deep water," said Pascal with a beam of satisfaction. "And he's relying on winning the Montefiore to pull him out of the mess. Well there's something we can do about that, Saggars—you and me!"

"I've told you before, Mr. Pascal," Saggars growled sullenly, clenching his fist. "I'll do anything to get even with Holmere and Barry Zane."

"And so you shall, my good fellow," smiled Pascal cunningly. "If Holmere goes bankrupt then I can buy him out cheap. So we've got to make sure he loses the Montefiore and that American order. Now this is what we'll do."

He leaned forward and gave the other lengthy, whispered instructions. Finally Saggars rose to his feet with an exultant grin and looked down at Pascal.

"You can count on me, boss," he sniggered.

"That's fine," replied Pascal, glancing at his watch. "Now you'd better get back to the works. Remember," he added warningly, "you've got to do this alone. I can't risk my name being mixed up in it. But if you pull it off, I'll pay you handsomely."

"It's in the bag, Mr. Pascal," Saggars smirked. "It's going to be a pleasure to even the score with that crowd!"

AT GRIPS WITH A SABOTEUR

IN the early hours of the following day, the Holmere works lay shrouded in darkness. In a roomy shed attached to the engineering shops, the precious Cyclone Special lay locked and secure. Whistling softly, a patrolling watchman tested the door carefully, then continued on his rounds. All was peaceful.

But, even as the man turned the corner, a burly figure flitted silently from the shadow of the opposite building towards the shed.

There came a faint chink of metal as he opened the padlock with a skeleton key. Then he slid inside and closed it soundlessly behind him.

Faintly from the darkened interior echoed a muffled clang as the night intruder raised the streamlined cowl of the Panther Special. Then silence once more descended as he went about his work.

Suddenly in the distance, however, came the hum of a car engine. Gradually it grew louder, then a small sports car slid to a halt in the compound. Barry Zane climbed out and started to walk swiftly towards the shed!

A peculiar feeling that something was wrong had woken him. Without pausing to awaken his snoring partner, he had slid on his clothes and left the house to make the trip to the Holmere works.

As he had driven down the darkened roads, he had laughed at his fears. But so much depended on the Panther that he obeyed his hunch and kept on. He had to make sure!

Suddenly, as Barry neared the door, he stiffened alertly. The padlock arm hung loose! His face hardened. Someone must be inside the shed!

Opening the door the merest fraction he glided inside.

Blinking, he forced his eyes to pierce the gloom. Vaguely he could make out the long, low shape of the great car in the centre of the floor.

Beyond it lay the shadowy mass of a heap of empty oil-drums.

Barry waited, breathing lightly, every faculty tensed to pick up the faintest sound. Nothing happened. His hand lifted to the wall-switch beside him. Then with a frown of annoyance he recalled that the current would be cut off at night.

Stealthily he took out a hand-torch, focused it on the Cyclone Special and flicked the button. A broad beam of light leaped out to centre on the racing-car.

An involuntary gasp of angered dismay broke from his lips. For part of the car-cowling had been removed to expose the great engine gleaming dully in the torchlight!

Eyes narrowed, jaw clenched, Barry looked about him for a weapon. There was nothing, but he knew he could count on his fists.

Settling himself firmly in the doorway, he swung the torch-beam in a steady arc.

"All right, I know you're in here somewhere," he grated. "Start walking towards me and don't try anything. You can't get away!"

There was no response!

But suddenly the silence was broken by a faint scuffling sound from behind the heap of oil-drums. Just as his torch swung to focus on it something

whistled out of the darkness, to strike the torch from his hand. It clattered down to the floor and the shed was plunged into pitch darkness.

The next instant a powerful shape had reared out of the darkness and hurtled at Barry. Locked in a deadly struggle, panting for breath, Barry grappled with his unknown assailant.

A teak-hard fist crashed into his jaw with pile-driving force. Bracing himself Barry shot out his own right fist in a short, crisp arc. His adversary grunted and sagged. Then recovering, he broke free with ox-like strength, from the young race-driver, lurched through the open doorway and sprinted across the compound.

In a flash Barry was on his feet and after him—only to see his quarry leaping into Barry's own sports car. Already the engine was shuddering into life with a venomous roar.

Putting everything into a final, desperate burst of speed, Barry reached the car just as it shot away. Hurling himself forward, his fingers clamped on the top of the spare wheel at the rear of the car; and then he was swept off his feet.

The sheer strength of his race-trained arms was for an instant all that held his body clear of the concrete racing past below him. Then he managed to hook his foot over the bumper-bar!

Eagerly his right hand clawed upwards to grasp the rear of the car's seat. In one deft movement he had pulled himself upright and slid into the seat next to the mysterious night-intruder.

A flick of his wrist on the starter-key and abruptly the engine died. The car careered wildly as its driver swung round on Barry with a snarl of fury!

But this time Barry was prepared. His bunched fist slammed home twice.

With an agonised grunt the mystery car saboteur collapsed, and holding his beaten quarry upright, Barry grabbed the steering-wheel and guided the vehicle to a halt.

Then he struck a match—and peered into the sullen face of Saggars!

"Saggars!" he gasped. Then he added menacingly, "So it was you! Okay, I'm taking you back to the boss. We'll find out what you were doing with the Cyclone!"

Ten minutes later, a group of grim-faced mechanics stood round the partially-dismantled engine of the Cyclone Special.

Amid a tense silence Stuart Kaye, the veteran chief mechanic, straightened up and walked across to examine his oil-smeared fingertips beneath the powerful light above the work bench. They were gritted with a fine, dully-gleaming dust.

The men tensed for his verdict!

"Emery-dust in the crank-case," he growled, turning back to join John Holmere and Barry Zane. "It you hadn't turned up just when you did,

Barry, that skunk Saggars would have got clean away with it.

"You'd have taken the Cyclone out on test tomorrow and before you'd travelled half way round the circuit, the bearings would have seized up. The engine would have been just so much junk!"

A low murmur of anger rose from the watching men. The vital Montefiore Grand Prix was due to commence in less than a fortnight's time. If the Cyclone's engine had been successfully sabotaged, there would barely have been time to install and run in a substitute!

Barry and John Holmere exchanged worried glances.

"We've grilled Saggars and we can't get a word out of him," exclaimed Barry. "I've a hunch there's someone behind him—and Saggars is too scared to confess who it is."

"I think you're right, Barry," snapped Holmere angrily. "Anyhow, there's no point in prosecuting Saggars for this business. I've sacked him, of course, and warned him to keep away from the works."

"In future the Cyclone will be guarded night and day. We're taking no more chances!"

That night as the two racing pals tumbled into their beds, Barry lay staring up into the darkness, his brow drawn with thought.

"The question is—who's behind Saggars?" he muttered. "As far as I know, the boss hasn't an enemy in the world!"

"For Pete's sake, Barry, quit worrying and go to sleep!" Roger grumbled drowsily. "Whoever it is, he's going to find it pretty tough even to get a sight of the Cyclone after this."

But the stormy interview which took place next day between Saggars and his crooked employer would have enlightened the two young race-drivers.

Saggars had presented himself at Pascal's office to confess his failure and his un-masking by Barry Zane.

"You blundering idiot!" roared Pascal, glaring at his hireling. "Why did you come here? You should have kept away. Now get out—and stay out! I'll handle this myself from now on!"

"Does that mean I'm paid off, Mr. Pascal?" asked Saggars hesitantly.

"No, maybe I can still use you," replied Pascal with a thoughtful frown. "Next week the Holmere camp will be going out to Italy with the Cyclone Special for the Montefiore. We'll be there before them. Now you clear out. I'll contact you when I need you."

Saggars slunk out of the office and Pascal lit a fresh cigar as he paced up and down the room, plotting a further campaign against the Holmere wonder-car.

MORE than a week had passed without any further mishap to the precious racing car, and at last its low, sleek bulk rolled down the trestles from a big freight-plane on an Italian airfield.

Transferred swiftly to a transporter-lorry, an hour later it lay safely housed in the town of Reggia, which was the base for the Montefiore Grand Prix.

The little town was in a ferment of excitement!

It has been taken over by members of most of the crack car-racing stables of Europe.

In every cafe could be seen parties of white-overalled mechanics, pit-attendants and officials, all eagerly discussing the faults and merits of the rival cars. And always in attendance were crowds of eagerly-listening fans.

For hours the roads of the surrounding countryside thundered to the roar of practising cars. It was the eve of the great Montefiore!

Barry turned out early next morning. While the mechanics unsheeted and wheeled out the Cyclone Special, he pulled on his head-visor and coloured scarf.

He had already driven over the famous circuit in another car to familiarise himself with the landmarks and gradients of the course. Now he was preparing to give the Cyclone its first preliminary trial run.

He slid behind the wheel and the engine bellowed lustily into life then sank to a snarling purr. As he cruised out into the road, a low, red car streaked past him at fantastic speed.

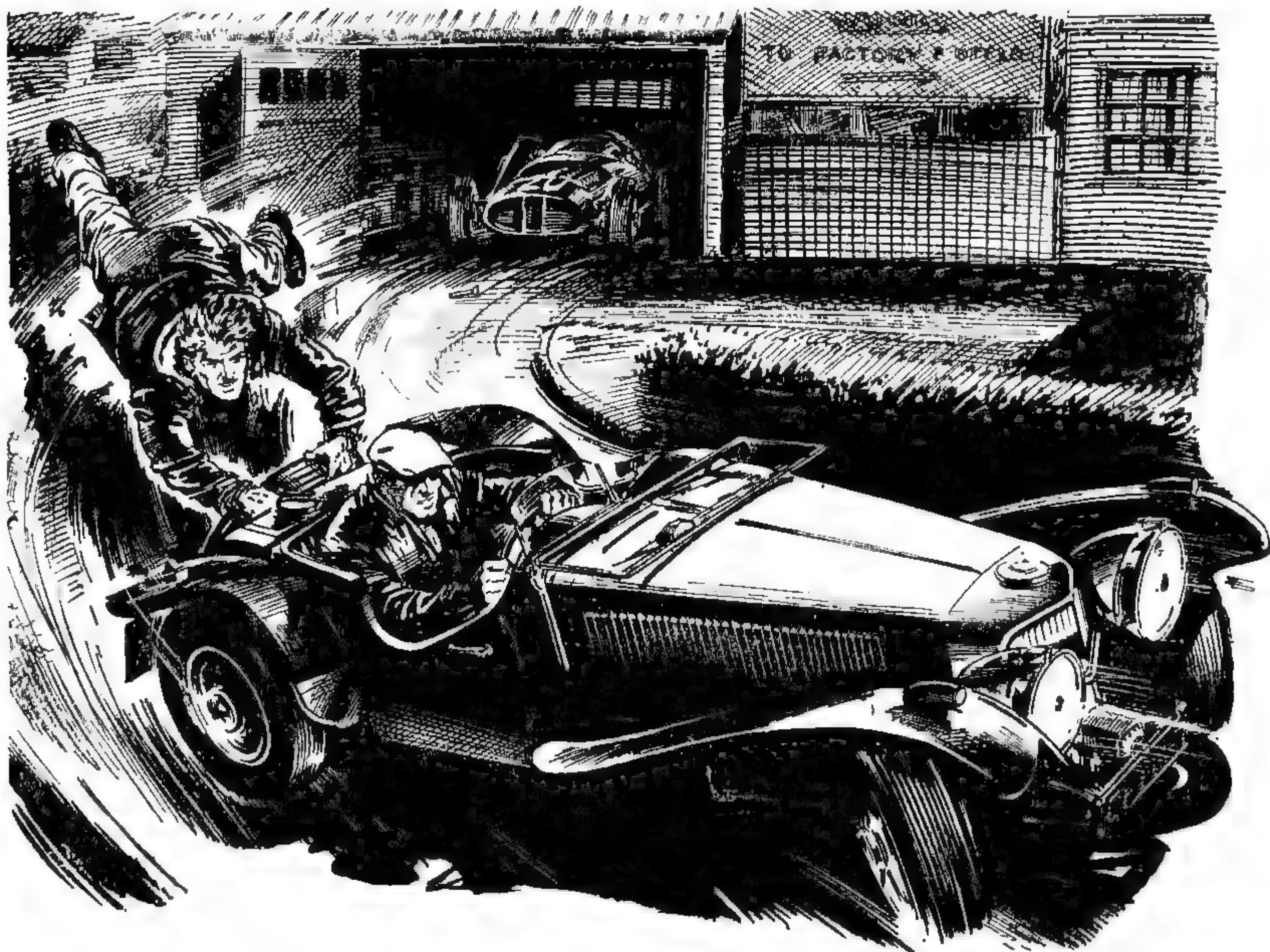
Barry caught a passing glimpse of flashing white teeth in a brown face and a hand lifted in greeting. He grinned and waved back. It was Pietro Carlotti, ace driver for the Masari team and general favourite to win.

The race consisted of ten circuits of the 100-kilometer course and it had been designed to test every aspect of modern car-racing—from the speed and stamina of the engine to the skill and tenacity of its driver.

Only one of the many hazards was the mountain section where the slightest error of judgment could have disastrous results.

But Barry had equal confidence in the phenomenal speed of the Cyclone Special and his own ability.

Thundering out in the wake of the Masari ace



Barry hurled himself through the air, grabbed the spare wheel, and hung on grimly. At all cost he meant to capture the mystery car-thief.

he put the car through its paces, braking with split-second accuracy at the bends, running through the gears with masterly precision, never hesitating to crack on top speed wherever the road gave a chance.

He coasted into the Holmere pits after that first circuit, his face caked with dust.

He knew he had put up a fast average time and he knew too from experience that improvement would come once he had fully mastered the intricacies of the course.

But Roger and the mechanics greeted him with long faces!

"What's eating you blokes?" Barry grinned banteringly. "You look as if you'd lost a quid and found an old inner-tube."

"We've just had Carlotti's first practise-lap time," answered Roger solemnly. "He lapped at ninety-three miles an hour from a standing start. That's an all-time record. Now you know what you're really up against!"

"Good for old Pietro," Barry nodded in generous appreciation of his rival's skill. "It will give us something to aim at."

And eagerly he roared off on another lap.

After three days of unremitting practice Barry was satisfied with the car's performance and his own prospects.

He had memorised every detail of the tricky, winding course. Now it was firmly fixed in his mind.

He had mapped out every gear-change, every braking-point with scientific thoroughness. For those vital fractions of a second saved on each gear-change could make the difference between failure and success.

Then, the evening before the Grand Prix, Barry and Roger decided to take a long walk before turning in early. They had passed into the countryside beyond Reggia and now they were stepping out.

"Seems queer we've seen nothing of Saggors since we landed here," Roger was saying. "He probably got cold feet and dropped out."

"I'm not so sure, Roger," Barry frowned thoughtfully. "What we have to worry about is the man behind Saggors. He might have decided to hold his hand until the race is on!"

As he spoke Barry casually turned to watch a powerful car moving up behind them. It was a long, low black saloon-car. Vaguely he made out someone at the wheel and a smaller man sitting beside him.

Suddenly he stiffened!

Fifty yards away the car swerved to the edge of the road. With ever increasing speed it swept towards the two young race-drivers, tyres screaming.

"Look out!" blurted Roger, "That chump must have gone haywire. What's he trying to do?"

The car was twenty yards away, now at top speed. Barry looked round to see the high stone wall behind them. They were trapped!

His glance dropped to the roadway. Stooping, he snatched up a stone and hurled it at the windscreen of the hurtling car. Almost in the same movement he pushed Roger off his feet to the ground then flung himself on top of him, hugging the foot of the wall.

Barry's aim was perfect. As the missile shattered the windscreen, the driver flinched and swung wide of the wall.

A spattering of gravel swept stinging into Barry's face from the hurtling wheels. Then the car had brushed past them and surged up the dusty road towards the hills.

"That fool ought to be in jail!" growled Roger wrathfully as he scrambled to his feet. "If you hadn't chucked that stone to wake him up—there'd have been a nasty accident!"

"No, Roger, it was no accident," Barry murmured quietly. He had risen and stood watching the receding car with a bleak frown.

"What! No accident?" cried Roger blankly. "You mean . . . he deliberately tried to run us down!"

"I guess so," Barry nodded. "The man driving that car was our friend Saggors! I didn't notice the other chap but I recognised Saggors all right."

"We'd better get back and warn the boss," said Roger grimly.

"No, Roger, we can't do that!" Barry retorted firmly. "He's got enough to worry about without this. We'll keep quiet and stay on our guard."

"If they make another move," he added with a steely smile, "it will be during the race. That will be my pigeon—nobody else's!"

The fateful day arrived. Ranged sleekly in front of the crowded stand stood the twelve competing cars.

They were probably the fastest and most efficient road-machines in the world. Their drivers were equally the cream of the world's talent.

The starter's flag dropped. Whining exhaust-notes soared to a tigerish snarl and the great cars swept into movement to a surging roar from the crowd. The Montefiore Grand Prix was on.

Straight off the grid Carlotti swept into the lead.

His obvious tactics were to set a cracking pace from the outset, and thus lure his rivals into errors of judgment as they fought desperately to keep up with him.

But Barry was too astute a driver to be taken in like this!

He lay comfortably in fifth place then gradually, as the field sorted itself out, he began to overhaul his nearest rivals.

By the halfway mark in the second lap, he lay

almost on Carlotti's tail, separated from the Italian master by a few precious seconds.

Slowly, irresistibly, Carlotti built up the pace. He was driving like a man inspired—cornering superbly, drifting round in wall-shaving sweeps, braking savagely, using every trick and art of his long experience to shake the Englishman off!

But Barry countered the veteran magnificently. Eyes glued to the twisting road ahead, he clung to the tail of the red Masari with grim tenacity.

By the fourth lap, he and Carlotti had established a clear lead over the rest of the field.

Barry's pit stop to re-fuel was a matter of seconds. While the pit-team worked on the Cyclone, filling the tank and checking the engine with unflurried speed, Barry snatched a drink and flexed his aching wrists.

"What's happened behind me?" he asked tensely.

"Three of them have blown up," replied Roger grimly. "You and Carlotti are setting a killing pace. Think you can keep it up, Barry?"

"I will—as long as Carlotti does," grated Barry. "The last three laps will tell!"

The cowlings were clipped into place and Barry slid out again onto the road, racing off after the Italian crack who, although he still had to re-fuel, had by this time increased his lead to almost forty seconds.

The ding-dong battle was on again. Barry was fighting to break down the gap between them, stealing a fraction of a second here on a screaming, tyre-punishing turn—another precious fraction there by delaying his braking to the very brink of disaster!

And it was working!

Duly completing his fifth lap, Carlotti roared into the Masari pits to re-fuel. Even as he slid out from the pits again, the Cyclone Special hurtled past him like a green meteor.

The Englishman had built up a seven second lead on the Italian!

But the race was by no means decided yet. Ahead lay five gruelling laps, five hundred kilometres of snaking, swooping roads. And pitted against Barry was probably the finest all-round driver of the world circuits—a man, too, who was riding on his home track!

Spurred on by sheer exultation, Barry concentrated on the road ahead. He was roaring along the straight sections at a hundred and seventy miles an hour, hurtling into the bends and floating round, whipping through the gears with deft-fingered precision, fighting every inch of the way.

Slowly and remorselessly the gap enlarged. Ten seconds. Thirteen seconds!

Midway through the eighth lap Barry thundered into the mountain section. Soon he had almost reached the crest.

Barry rounded a corner with screeching brakes!

Suddenly his eyes narrowed with dismay. A thick black pool of oil lay directly in his path.

And there, laboriously climbing the slope to reach a car parked above them were the figures of Saggars and an older man.

Then Barry was fighting for his life, fighting with a ton of hurtling metal to dodge the deadly oil-patch. Once the turning wheels hit it, they would lose their grip and the Cyclone Special would go into an uncontrollable broadside over the edge of the drop!

Barry snatched the wheel round in a sickening roll then gave a swift jab at the accelerator-pedal.

The racing-car left the road, hit the sloping mountainside with a bone-jarring wrench, then careered on—in the track of the two fleeing crooks, who had now reached their car.

Barry could see Saggars sitting agitatedly at the wheel. The car began to move. Suddenly an agonised cry hit the air. One swift glance told Barry what had happened. The brakes had failed on the slope and now the car was heading downwards towards the roadway.

But Barry was ready. Skilfully he steered the Cyclone Special clear of the speeding car then edged it to one side—with the inevitable result. The saloon car slewed crazily broadside then hit a rock and capsized. Its occupants were out cold.

But Barry had other things on his mind. Wrenching the bucking Cyclone back on to the road, he leaped out and ran back to the bend. He had to warn the fast-approaching Carlotti of the deadly oil-patch.

Rapidly Barry explained as the surprised Italian roared to a halt.

"There's a team of officials just below," Carlotti snapped, with a glare at the overturned car. "We'll drop word to them to send a squad up to clean up that oil and take charge of those two rogues."

"We're five minutes ahead of the others—so we can make it comfortably. Now," he added with a grin, "shall we start up again?"

But Barry had deliberately sacrificed his precious lead to warn Carlotti!

Now he had to retrieve them and flash on to victory. Fortunately the Cyclone Special had taken no damage from the hill-slope episode. The two cars raced down to the plain.

Forty minutes and nearly two laps later, a tense gasp rose from the crowded stands. Still neck and neck, Barry and Carlotti were racing to the finish.

Then in a final burst both had passed the checkered flag. Only the keen-eyed judges saw that Barry had just edged out his famous rival.

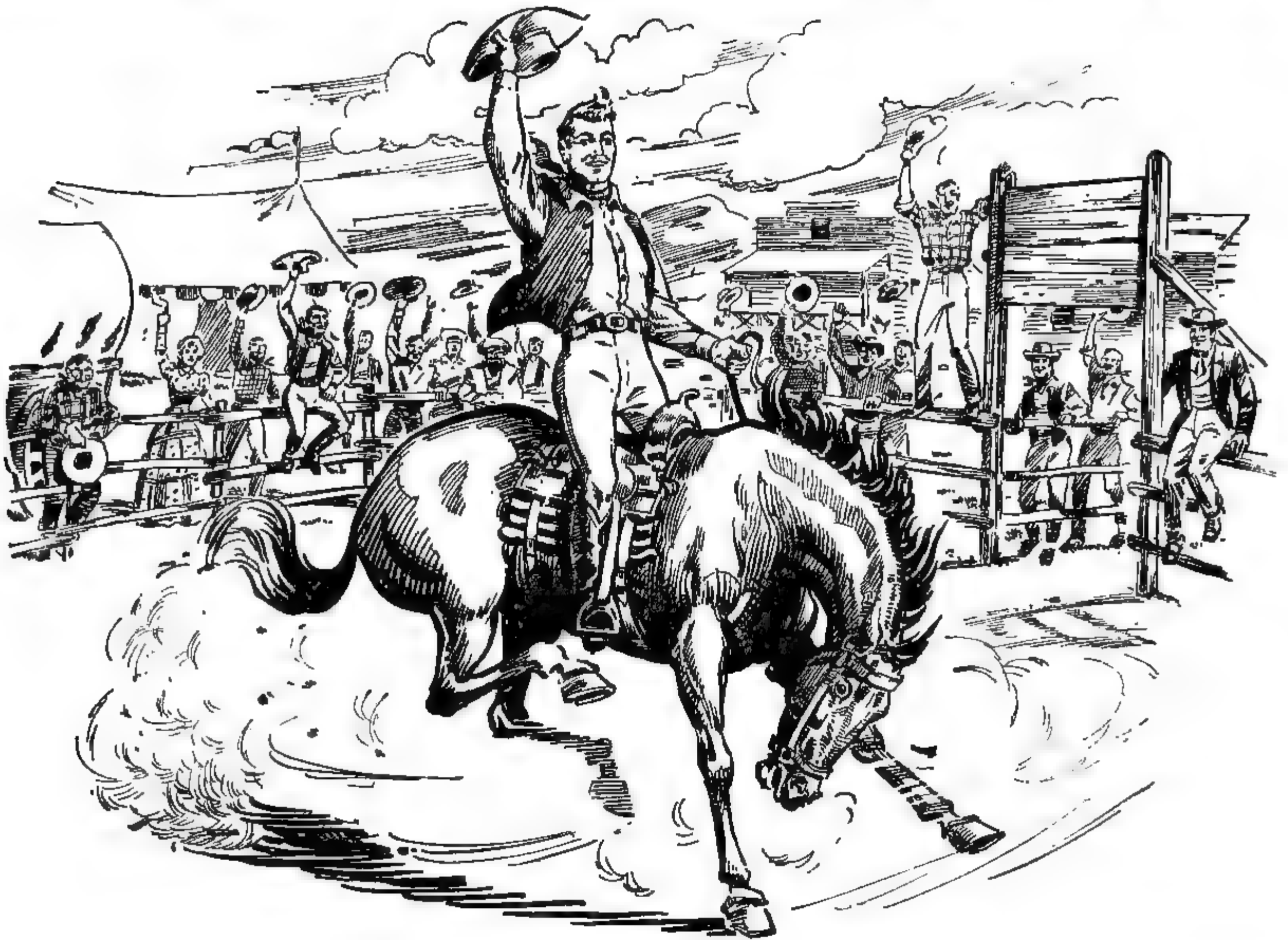
Victory had gone to the Cyclone Special!

And Barry had not only won the race-driving championship—he had also preserved the famous Holmere crest from extinction.

THE END

BICK SANDERS—BRONCO-BUSTER

BY
EDGAR
SINCLAIR



THE BOULDER CITY BULLY

SUFFERING snake-bite!" bellowed Lofty Tendler excitedly. "It looks like Boulder City has gone clean haywire over the rodeo, Bick."

The tall and lean young man in bright tartan shirt and dust-covered jeans reined in his horse, and pointed downwards to the plain below.

"It sure does, Lofty," muttered his companion thoughtfully. "I guess every cowpoke in the state must be down there and just raring to fork those rodeo brons."

The speaker was a wide-shouldered, level-eyed man with a sun-bronzed face. As he spoke a lazy smile hovered on his lips. He had pulled in his handsome black stallion, Starlight. Now he lounged easily in the saddle, studying the plain from beneath the down-turned brim of his stetson.

He was Bick Sanders, an agent of the Texas Cattlemen's Association. Lofty Tendler, the tall Texan, was his loyal assistant and partner. Their job was to roam the cattle country, keeping a sharp lookout for evidence of rustlers and illegal brand-

fakers. Now they had reached the outskirts of Boulder City on one of their missions.

Below the two riders lay the straggling cow-town. It was one of the roughest, toughest settlements on the plains, with a mixed population of cattlemen, business folk, gamblers and desperadoes. Only the strong reputation of its veteran marshal, Big Tom Vinson, was able to keep any sort of law and order!

But now the sun-baked little town was celebrating.

Every building which lined the single main street was decked with gay bunting. The faint crackle of six-gun fire echoed in the surrounding foothills as hordes of fun-seeking cowboys spurred their wiry ponies along the centre of the wide street, loosing off slugs into the air out of sheer high spirits.

Some distance beyond Boulder City, Bick's sun-puckered eyes made out the stockades and pens of the local rodeo outfit.

"D'you reckon those boys are liable to get out of hand, Bick?" growled Lofty with a questioning frown at his partner. "Seems to me if one of those

The Texas Bully was Known as "Bear" — but Bick Knew How to Tame Him!

slugs goes astray and finds a target, some of the real bad men might be tempted to muscle in!"

Bick's teeth gleamed white in his brown face as he shook his head smilingly.

"I guess not, Lofty," he replied. "They're just having fun. I reckon Tom Vinson knows that, too, and is keeping one eye shut. It isn't every day there's a big rodeo organized in these parts. Come on, let's get down there and rustle up some feed for the horses."

As they swung down in the main street and hitched their horses to the rail, Bick looked up with a grin. A few yards away a bunch of cowboys had cornered an old jack-mule and were trying to straddle its back in an attempt to ride it.

But the trail-wise old mule was too cunning even for these practised horsemen. One by one the whooping cowboys were pitched over the mule's neck, to shouts of laughter from their companions.

Bick and his sidekick exchanged delighted winks.

"Why, I guess that old critter could un-seat a hoss-fly," Bick grinned. "The man hasn't been born that can throw a hitch over a mule and ride it—if the mule doesn't choose to be ridden . . ."

His voice broke off abruptly. Bick's eyes narrowed as they focused on the batwing doors of the saloon opposite. The doors had been kicked open with brutal force—and a huge hulk of a man had burst through on to the sidewalk. He was looking down on the street now, his thick lips curled in a contemptuous sneer.

His enormous shoulders and long, bear-like arms spelt savage, crushing strength. His bare head was close-cropped, and a pair of tiny, deep-set eyes peering pig-like from his unshaven face warned of vicious, smouldering cruelty.

"Hold it, Lofty," Bick murmured, his eyes fixed on the newcomer. "Looks like Bear Schneider has hit town. Wherever he goes, he and his mob start trouble!"

As Bick spoke, Schneider lumbered carelessly down the steps from the sidewalk and slouched across to his horse. Unhitching it he swung up, then snatched brutally at the reins. At the same time his huge cartwheel spurs gouged deep into the animal's already heavily scarred flanks. With a whinny of pain it reared on its hind legs.

Bick acted with bewildering speed!

He slid across the street with panther-like speed and his right hand shot out to grab the horse's bridle. Obedient to the strength of that iron grip, Schneider's horse pulled up, almost unseating its rider.

Bick looked up at Schneider from ice-bleak eyes!

"I guess you forgot to examine your horse, mister," Bick's voice came low, but forceful. "His mouth's tender—and there's a running sore on his flank where you dig those spurs of yours in."

"I'd say this animal needs medical attention before you move another step!"

Schneider stiffened in the saddle and ran his eyes over the tall figure standing below him. His lips twisted in an angry snarl. He climbed down deliberately and stood facing Bick, his hands on his hips.

"You trying to tell me how to handle a cayuse, stranger?" he growled huskily.

At the same time he lifted a restraining hand to his followers who were watching the scene from the sidewalk. Obviously Bear Schneider felt confident he could handle this alone!

"I figure someone ought to tell you," said Bick, his eyes glinting with a mocking gleam. "Any man who treats a horse this way ought to trade in his saddle for a rocking-chair!"

A low gasp flickered through the intently-watching crowd as Bick's words got home. For Bear Schneider had a big reputation as a rough-house fighter.

Suddenly, moving with cat-like agility for all his bulk, the bully slid forward and reached out his hands to grab Bick in the terrible bear-hug which had given him his nickname.

His arms closed on empty air. For, elusive as a phantom, Bick had side-stepped. The next instant his iron fist swung upwards to connect with Schneider's jaw.

The bully went over with a sickening jolt—only to scramble to his feet and come in again.

This time he was more careful and moved in slowly. Then his great fists flailed hammer-blows, any one of which would have knocked Bick senseless if it had got home—but Bick ducked and parried them skilfully. Each time his fists sank into Schneider's shuddering bulk grunts of pain signalled their success.

Finally the bully, who was still strong, for all the punishment he had taken, changed his tactics. Head weaving like a wounded bull, his tiny pig-eyes glittering, he hurled himself towards the lightly-swaying agency-man in a frantic endeavour to get to grips with him.

But Bick knew that once he was caught in that bear-like grip, skill and science would be useless.

He waited, swaying on the balls of his feet. At the last moment, when the two groping hands were almost touching him, Bick's right hand flicked out and clamped on Schneider's wrist.

Then, swift as lightning, he swung round, braced his body and heaved powerfully on the bully's tautened arm.

There was a howl of anguished surprise—and Schneider's huge bulk catapulted through the air to hit the ground with a bone-jarring crash!

He lay there, winded and dazed. All the fight

had been shaken out of him by that tremendous throw.

"Okay, Schneider, get up on your feet and see that horse is fixed up," panted Bick, looking down on his stunned opponent.

"Look out, Bick! Behind you!"

Lofty Tendler's voice rang out in urgent warning. Pivoting swiftly on his heels, Bick caught a glimpse of two of Schneider's cronies as they went for their guns.

Bick's hands flicked to his gun-butts in a blur of speed.

Hurling himself sideways, he took a snap aim and pressed the trigger. Two bullets screamed viciously past his head just as his own gun spat yellow flame. There was a yelp of pain as Bick's whining slug tore the six-gun from the hand of one of Schneider's men.

Another bullet, this time from Lofty Tendler's shooting iron, hurled the second Schneider man backward's with a hand clasped to his shoulder.

"All right, boys," Bick grated to the remaining members of Schneider's gang as they stood watching him sullenly. "I've got more slugs left. What's it to be?"

But the gunmanship of the two strangers was too impressive for the toughs to risk provoking any more. The desperadoes knew they were licked. In a hostile silence they picked up their fallen chief and hustled him along the street towards one of the saloons.

RIVALS FOR THE RODEO CROWN

FIVE minutes later, Bick and Lofty sat in the town gaolhouse, speaking to Tom Vinson, the Boulder City marshal. Bear Schneider's horse was in the skilful hands of Cy Rainbow, the veteran horse-handler of Boulder City.

"You sure took that gorilla Schneider for a run, Bick," rasped Vinson, scratching his cheek thoughtfully. "But all the same, he's snake-poison! Better keep your eyes peeled for him after this. What brings you to these parts, anyway?"

"Just keepin' an eye open for cattle-rustlers," said Bick. "I thought we might take a spell off this afternoon to watch the rodeo, though."

"It looks like Schneider's got the rodeo in the bag," said Vinson, shrugging.

"Why? What's the play, Tom?" Bick's voice was anxious as he cut in.

"Just this," replied the grey-haired Marshal. "Schneider is entering for the steer-throwing contest, and one of his sidekicks—by the name of Hunk Mallory—is down for the bronco-riding.

"It's just too bad that two of our best Boulder City riders got hurt in a cattle stampede on the Crazy-J outfit last week. They won't be fit to ride. The rest of the boys don't stand any more chance

against Schneider and Mallory than a bull-calf among a pack of mountain lions!"

Bick gave a low whistle. "Gee, that's bad, Tom!" he said with concern. "I'd sure like to help some way!"

Vinson leant across his desk. He looked at the two agency men with a frosty twinkle in his eyes.

"That's what I hoped you'd say," he smiled. "Before you took up this agency work for the Cattle Association, Bick, you were one of the best hombres that ever slung saddle! I remember that day two years ago you went out and put up record times for bronco-busting and steer-throwing against the old Mullen rodeo outfit. Now, how'd it be if I entered you for today's shindig. The boys would be sure grateful for your help."

"Hold on, old timer," Bick protested, with a wry wink at Lofty. "I'm bang out of shape for this kind of stuff. To make good in a rodeo, a feller has to be in top trim. I wouldn't be any use, Tom. I guess you'd better count me out."

Vinson rose to his feet and eyed Bick shrewdly.

"You heard what I said, Bick," he growled. "How would you like to see Schneider's mob crowing over us?"

"Why, if that whiskery skunk scores over your boys, Tom, I suppose Boulder City won't be big enough to hold him!" put in Lofty hotly.

"And my job would be all the tougher," agreed Vinson with a quick glance at Bick. "If his bunch start lording it, some of our boys might be tempted to come back at them, and then there'd be trouble—shooting trouble!"

"Okay, Tom, you win," said Bick decisively, rising to his feet. "You can count me in. First of all we'll look to the horses, then get ourselves some chow and ride down to the rodeo site to size up the opposition."

At two o'clock that afternoon the two agency-men reined in at the rodeo ground and were looking about them eagerly. For hours streams of excited cowhands had been riding in from the surrounding countryside, all drawn by the magic lure of the Western rodeo.

Bick's eyes roved over the tightly-packed stands, the great arena, and the stockades where fierce, untamed mustangs grazed and unbroken steers bawled defiance at the sightseers.

The air was filled with excited suspense. Soon, in that dusty, sun-baked arena, would be waged a thrilling contest between man and animal; the battle of men's skill and courage against the brute strength and cunning of untamed horse and steer.

Already the news of Bick's coming tussle with Schneider and his gang had spread through the stands. His arrival was greeted with a ripple of applause.

"Keep your fingers crossed, Lofty," he grinned.

"Let's hope they don't run us out of town when it's all over."

As he spoke his eyes rested on a knot of men bunched tightly together by the rails near the competitors' pen. Bear Schneider's huge bulk and fight-scarred face loomed prominent among them. They were engaged in a muttered conference. Suddenly Schneider looked up and glared evilly at Bick, while his thick lips twisted in a triumphant sneer.

"I'll stake a month's pay to a bent nickel that bird's cooking up trouble for you, Bick," muttered Lofty.

"I'll handle that when it comes my way," shrugged Bick, and started to move towards the rails. "Let's get moving, Lofty. Looks like the show is just beginning."

An expectant hush had fallen over the crowd. A bunch of officials entered the arena and took up their stations. Soon a stage-coach lumbered round the enclosure three times, flanked by some of the rodeo-riders and a circling column of fiercely-whooping painted Indians on their fiery pinto ponies.

When at last the parade had withdrawn, an official's gun gave the signal for the first event. It was the bronco-riding.

The draw was announced, and a roar went up from the stands. Bick and Hunk Mallory, Schneider's crony, had been drawn together. Mallory was down to take the first ride.

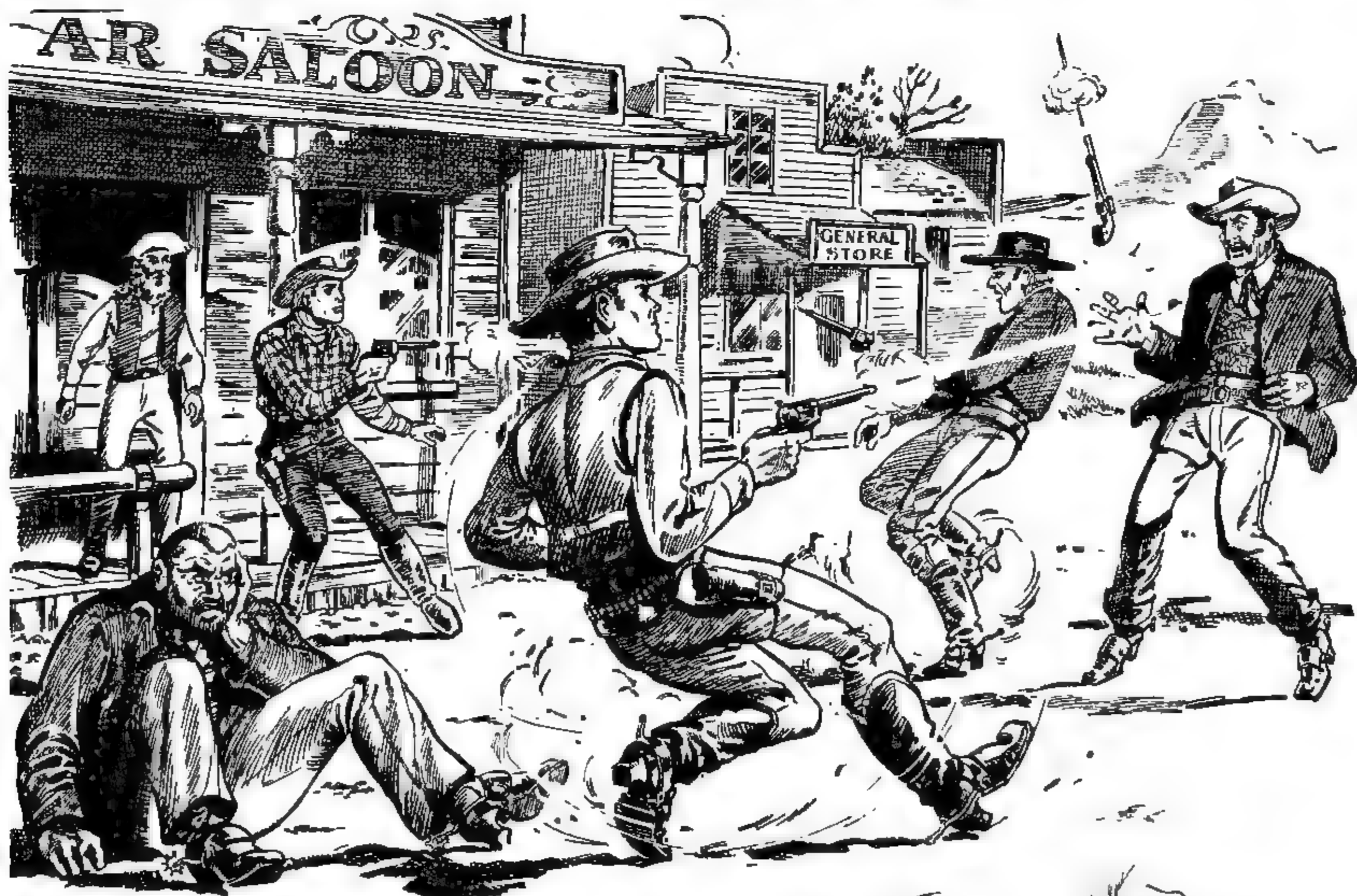
The crowd hushed as Mallory sauntered out to the narrow chute where his mustang was penned. Already two rodeo handlers had slid a saddle on to its back and strapped it firmly, then hitched a loose rein to its sweating neck.

Now the mustang waited for the contest, its eyes rolling wildly, quivering with rage at the indignity of the saddle and rein.

The rules of the contest were simple. Assisted only by a single hand-hold on the rein, the rider had to keep the other hand raised aloft in the air, while his spurred feet raked the flanks of his mount to urge it to even greater effort. He had to maintain his seat for a period of ten seconds or be disqualified.

In the event of a tie, the decision would be given to the rider who put up the most stylish and daring performance.

Ten seconds was not a long time—but it could seem an eternity to a man mounted on a whirling, frantically-plunging mustang with only the assistance of one flimsy hand-hold, a sense of balance and the pressure of his thighs!



"Look out, Bick! Behind you!" yelled Lofty. In a flash Bick whipped round and fired. Before Schneider's cronies knew what was happening, their six-shooters had been shot out of their hands!

With expert eyes Bick watched Mallory climb the chute-rails and slide down on to the mustang's back.

It was evident that the Schneider man was an experienced performer. Taking his seat in the saddle, Mallory lifted his hand in signal to the handlers.

The chute bars dropped and the mustang hurtled out into the dusty, sunbaked arena. It surged under him, a bucking, sidewinding, whirling bundle of muscle-packed energy with only one thought in its hate-crazed brain—to get rid of the being which straddled its back.

Mechanically Bick counted off the seconds as Mallory clung grimly to the bronc. Then, at eight seconds, just when victory lay in sight, the wily bronc arched its body and hurled itself fully four feet clear of the ground.

For a split-instant, Mallory was poised in mid-air, half out of the saddle. The mustang snaked sideways, made a sudden whip-like turn—then dropped on stiffened legs with a bone-wracking jar.

Mallory shot outwards and hit the ground in a dusty heap!

While two riders herded the victorious bronc to the pens, he limped back to Schneider who stood scowling at the rails.

"Sorry, Bear," he grunted. "I guess that critter had one trick too many for me."

"The only trick that cayuse had was knowing when it carried a greenhorn on its back!" rasped Schneider sourly. "It's just as well I took no chances on you winning. It cost me big money to talk those two chute-handlers round to my way of thinking."

Schneider jerked his thumb towards the pens where the two chute-attendants were busy herding a mustang into the chute ready for Bick's bid. It was a gaunt, raw-boned sorrel, with a wild eye. Its hide was lathered with nervous sweat.

"That bronc is a killer," said Schneider with cold viciousness. "Even a rodeo professional would be scared to straddle it. I guess Bick Sanders is in for a wild time. Let's go over and see the fun."

RESCUING A RUTHLESS ENEMY

MEANWHILE, ignorant of the deception worked on him by Schneider and the two bribed handlers, Bick was preparing to make his bid. He had no suspicion that the mustang which awaited him in the chute was a notorious killer horse. Three times previously it had thrown and trampled its aspiring riders until, at last, the rodeo organisers had relegated it permanently to the stockades as a useless rogue-stallion, too dangerous to handle.

Now it was being released in a bid to maim Bick and so wreck the chances of the Boulder City team!

A tense silence lay over the stands as Bick mounted

the chute-rails and slid downward into the saddle. He signalled his readiness, and the two crooked chute-attendants exchanged meaning glances. Then they dropped the bars and ducked away.

The bronc shot out into the open arena.

It stopped abruptly, sliding back on its haunches.

Poised coolly and alertly, Bick plied his blunted spurs to goad the animal into activity.

In response, the mustang's head whipped round, eyes flaming with hatred, its yellow teeth bared.

Only just in time Bick snatched away his leg as the foaming jaws closed in a vicious snap.

Frustrated in this, the mustang leapt like a coiled spring into a series of violent contortions which flung its rider about in the saddle like a cork. But always Bick was in command, anticipating every movement, swaying easily and lithely.

Five seconds had passed when the mustang changed its tactics. Cunningly, it swerved towards the stout rails encircling the arena. Its heavy body cannoned against them in an attempt to pin Bick's leg.

But the agency man was prepared for it. His leg swung clear of danger. His left hand, still grasping the makeshift rein, lightly cuffed the mustang's head in reproof.

A shrill whinny of rage broke from the foam-flecked muzzle. The horse started to rear on its hind legs in an effort to hurl itself bodily backwards, and crush Bick beneath its weight. Again the agency man had anticipated and countered the move with effortless skill.

Standing in the stirrups, he flung his weight forward on to the bronc's neck, forcing it back on to the sun-baked earth.

The mustang's madly-flailing hooves hit the ground again—only to find Bick still firmly in the saddle!

A thunder of acclamation broke from the crowded stands at this exhibition of sheer artistry.

Then the hate-crazed bronc made its final bid to annihilate the man who had so far thwarted it. Again it reared on its hind legs.

As Bick swayed forward in the saddle to keep his balance, the great bony skull jerked backwards like a trip-hammer—to strike Bick full between the eyes!

Stunned and blinded by the impact, he was holding on only by instinct as the maddened, frenzied beast plunged and twisted in a desperate effort to unseat him.

Bick clung on grimly, fighting to regain control of his reeling brain, every bone in his body jarred by the thrust of the pounding hooves as the stallion wheeled and bucked on the iron-hard ground.

Suddenly a tremendous uproar surged about him. Peering through the swirl of dust, Bick saw the spectators rising to their feet in a frenzy of applause. Two rodeo-riders closed in on him to corner the

mustang. The ordeal was over. Bick had ridden out the ten seconds—against a killer-horse!

He slid down and walked unsteadily back towards the rails.

"Gee, Bick, what hit you?" gasped Lofty, studying the bruise already lifting on his partner's forehead.

"I guess I forgot to duck," grinned Bick. "That bronc carries a bigger punch in his skull than a team of pack-mules!"

He turned as a burly, frock-coated figure came striding towards him. It was Gil Chester, the rodeo organiser. His eyes were blazing with anger. Held firmly in the grip of his huge hand was one of the crooked chute-attendants.

"I'm sorry about this, mister," growled Chester. "First thing I knew was when this snake loosed that killer into the arena with you on its back. But I've wrung the truth out of him."

"What are you talking about, Mr. Chester?" frowned Bick blankly. "I don't understand."

Rapidly Chester explained how Schneider had bribed the attendant to see that Bick's mount was the notorious killer horse.

Then Chester turned and pointed accusingly across to where Schneider and his mob had closed up on the rails, watching him with evil grins, their hands poised above their holsters.

"It was none of my doing, stranger," Chester rasped. "There's the skunk who bribed my men—Schneider! I'll throw him and his two-timing mob off the pitch!"

Bick's hand shot out and clamped on Chester's arm as he moved forward menacingly towards the waiting Schneider gang.

"Hold it, Mr. Chester," he said quietly. "If you start a showdown with that bunch, they'll probably wreck the rodeo. The best way we can even the score with them is to carry on and lick the tar out of them in the contests. That'll hit Schneider where it hurts most—in his pocket! He's staked so much money on winning, he just can't afford to lose!"

Chester eyed Bick shrewdly, then nodded his agreement.

"I figure you're right," he growled. "Okay, we'll let it go at that. But my men will be watching him. If he tries to pull any more dirty play—there'll be a settlement!"

Just then a roar of acclamation greeted the umpire's decision, giving the event to Bick.

On the rails, Schneider scowled angrily.

"That means we got to pull out everything for the steer-throwing," he grunted. "If we win, we'll just about break even. If we lose, we're cleaned out."

"But we're not aiming to lose," he added with a vindictive leer and flexed his huge, muscle-bound arms, "because I'm riding this event. And there

isn't a man in the Boulder City team that can hold a candle to me when it comes to steer-tossing!"

Now the arena had been cleared for what was the most strenuous and exacting of all rodeo contests—the steer-throwing. Into each of the chutes a three-year old steer, unbroken and at the peak of its physical strength, had been herded.

The rules were simple. Each entrant in turn rode out into the arena, and a steer was driven towards him. He had to ride abreast of it, make a flying leap down on to the horns, drag the steer to the ground by sheer strength, then truss it so that it lay helpless.

He was fighting against the stop-watch all the time since the speediest performance gained the verdict.

With a last confident wink at his cronies, Schneider swaggered towards the chutes.

Suddenly a look of sheer disbelief crossed his face. For instead of the Boulder City entrant moving to join him, Bick Sanders stood there, lolling against the rails.

"Say, what's the idea, Sanders?" Schneider snarled. "You aren't working in this event?"

"You've got another guess coming, Schneider," replied Bick coolly. "The Boulder City man let me take his place. Maybe he figured it would make you happier just having me around!"

For a moment a flicker of fear leapt into Schneider's tiny eyes, then he laughed harshly.

"Okay, Sanders, it's you and me for it," he blurted. "But this time there'll be no slip-up. You've got to be tough to handle those steers. Here, I'll show you what I mean."

Stooping, he snatched up a length of fence-rail from the ground. It was hickory, almost two inches thick, seasoned and tough. Schneider flexed his powerful wrists and the stake snapped like a dry twig. He tossed the two pieces at Bick's feet with a taunting grin and walked off towards the chutes.

By now the draw had been announced. Bick was to take the first steer, and Schneider the second.

The spectators seethed with excitement as Bick swung up on to Starlight, his superb black stallion, and entered the ring.

The chute-bar dropped and a long-horn steer lumbered into the enclosure.

At a touch of its master's knee, Starlight moved in to run alongside the racing steer.

Bick leant outwards from the saddle, hands poised, judged the distance, then took a flying leap into mid-air.

His fingers closed on the glass-smooth horns, and he was being dragged with the steer, his boot-heels braking savagely in the ground.

The steer halted its run and began to flounder, its head clamped immovably in that iron grip. Then slowly Bick tightened the pressure, every muscle

and tendon from wrist to shoulder rigid as sculptured bronze.

The great head began to swing earthwards. At last the steer toppled to the ground.

Bick dropped across its prostrate body and reached up to snatch the lariat from the pommel of Starlight's saddle above him.

Three smooth and lightning-swift turns round the steer's legs and it was securely trussed. Bick rose and stood aside. A roar went up from the spectators when his time was announced.

Thirteen-and-a-half seconds!

Now it was time for Schneider's bid.

Hardly had the cheering for Bick's performance died down when Schneider rode out into the enclosure. As he watched him, Bick's mouth clamped like a steel trap and his eyes narrowed with anger.

"Why, the dirty skunk," he snapped to Lofty beside him. "He's riding that sick horse of his!"

"Let's go out there and haul him down!" growled Lofty.

"It's too late," said Bick. "There's nothing we can do now. But a man who mishandles his horse should know better than use it in a steer-throwing match. A horse that doesn't trust its rider can cause trouble!"

Hardly were the words out of Bick's mouth than his prediction came true!

For as the steer came charging out of the chute, Schneider spurred his mount alongside and leant outwards to grasp the horns.

In that moment his horse shied away nervously. A gasp of dismay swept through the spectators as they saw Schneider, thrown off balance, lurch and fall. His spurred boot caught in his stirrup-iron.

Panic-stricken now, his horse began to race frantically round the arena, dragging Schneider along the ground with it!

But worse was to follow. The steer was thundering behind the helpless bully, hooking at him with its terrible horns!

A terrified call for help broke from Schneider's lips as he fought vainly to ward off the attack.

For a moment the watchers were dumbfounded.

Then several rodeo-helpers gathered their wits and spurred frantically to his assistance.

But someone had forestalled them!

Starlight was streaking across the arena at top speed, with Bick in the saddle.

Reaching the steer, the great horse charged its flanks with its broad chest—to toss the enraged beast kicking and rolling.

A split-second later, Bick had reached out to Schneider's horse, caught the bit and pulled it to a halt.

He dismounted and freed the bully's jammed foot.

"I figure you got just what you asked for, Schneider," he said in a low, contemptuous voice. "I guess you're out of the contest now, and the stakes go to the Boulder City team. Best thing you can do is to move out of town. I'll take care of your horse till he's fit and well again."

A wild gleam shot into the bully's eye.

"We'll see about that," he sneered, rising from the ground and swinging round to face his gang by the rails. "My boys are ready to shoot it out here and now. You'll never get away with . . .!"

Then he stopped. His mouth gaped open foolishly and words refused to come. For his men stood disarmed and sullen under the menacing guns of Lofty Tandler and Tom Vinson, the Marshal.

"We took care of that too, Schneider," said Bick with a slow smile. "You see, we hold all the cards. You're finished. Why not be sensible and pull out before you really get hurt?"

Two hours later, Bick and Lofty were preparing to leave Boulder City. They had seen Schneider and his beaten mob ride out along the eastern trail, their sway in the cattle town broken for ever.

"Guess we're all mighty grateful to you, son," said Tom Vinson, as he shook hands with Bick and Lofty. "Any time your job brings you to these parts again, look us up."

"We sure will," grinned Bick.

He massaged his bruised forehead ruefully.

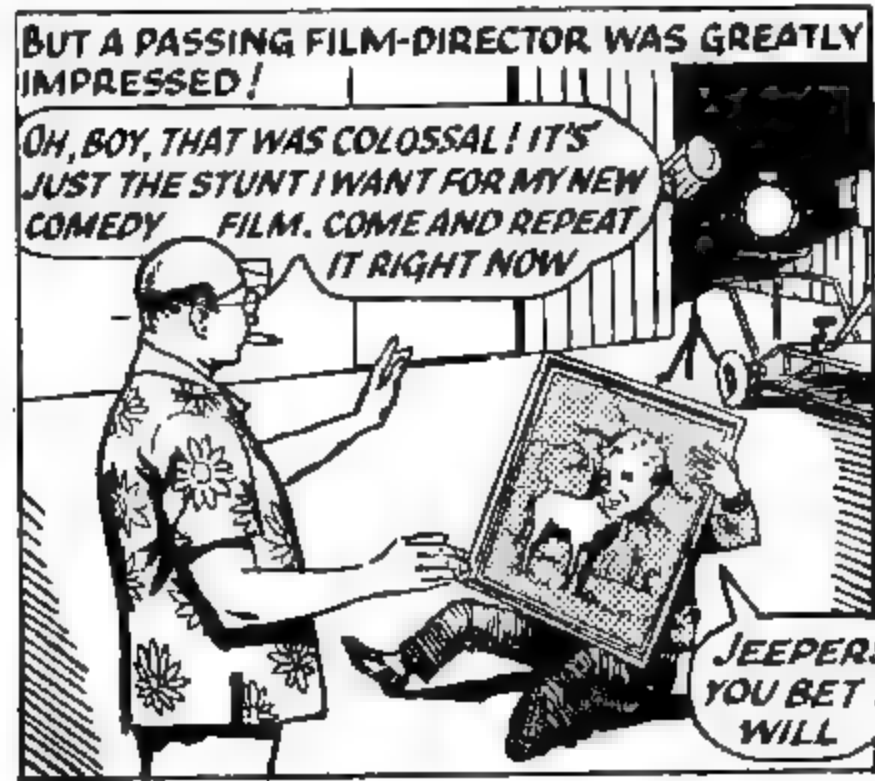
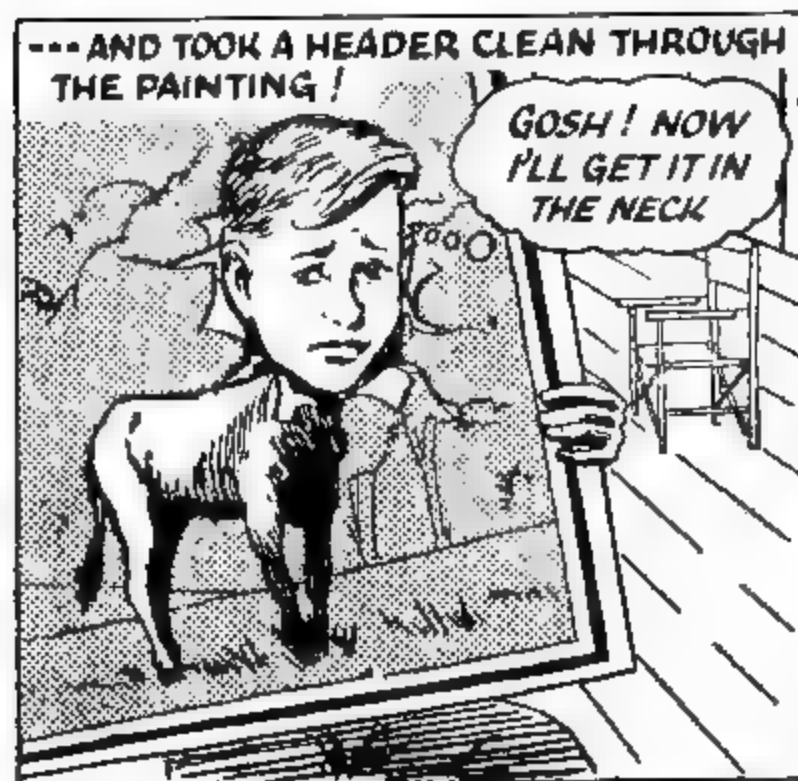
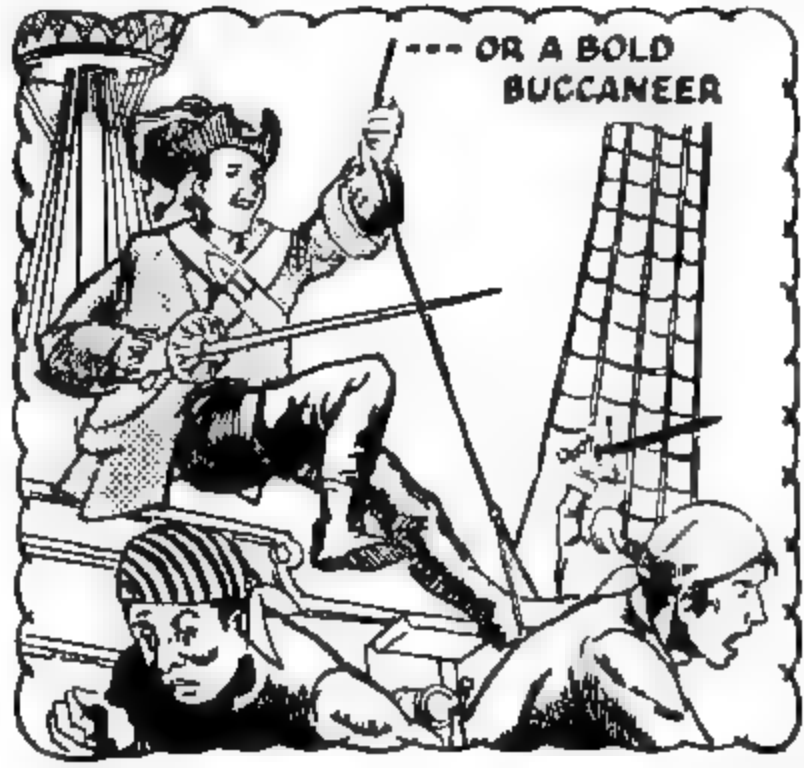
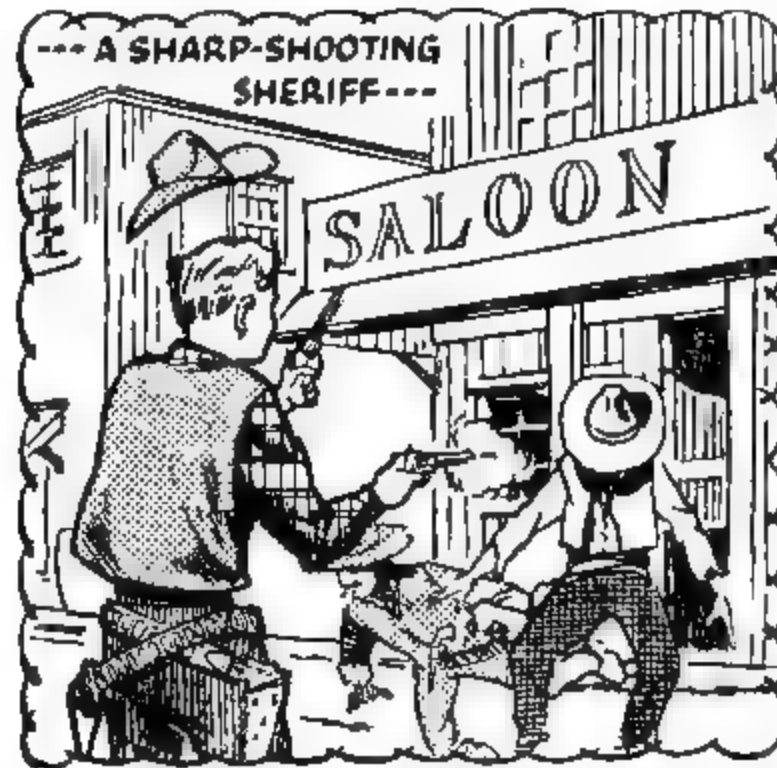
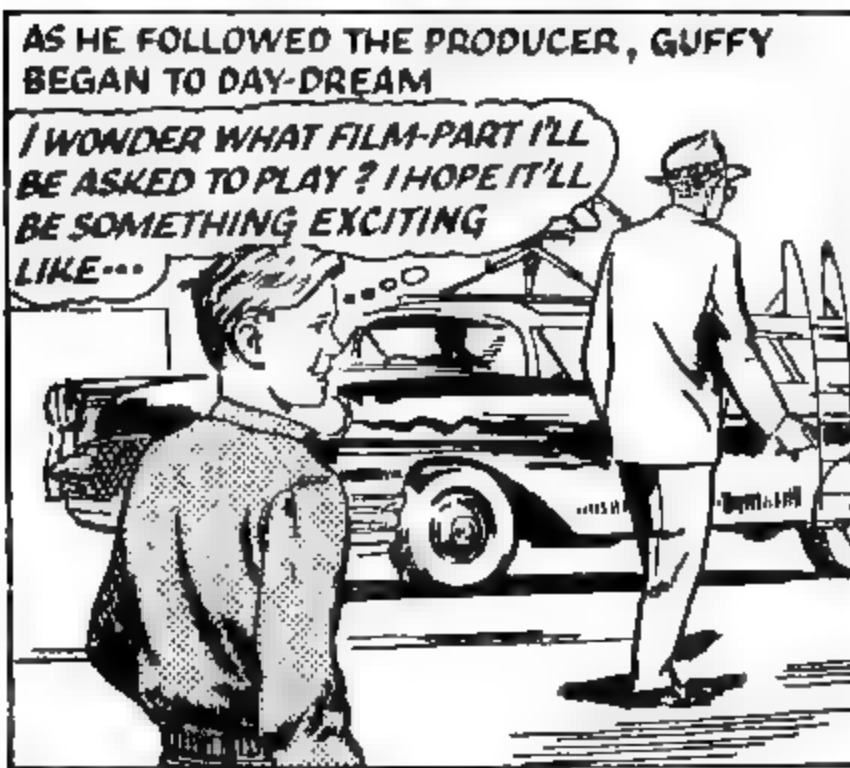
"Maybe we'll stick to rustlers and suchlike for a while, though. It's more peaceful!"

THE END

ANSWERS TO "WORLD-WIDE QUIZ" (See page 64)

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. "Good evening." | 7. A Sou'wester. | 14. It's the metal stand in the middle which holds the compass. |
| 2. It's a Vickers Viking. | 8. It is his tribe's way of resting. | 15. The one on the right. The instrument on the left is an ordinary clarinet. |
| 3. Yes. The rafflesia flower of Sumatra grows up to three feet in width. | 9. Trans-Canada Airlines. | 16. Water. |
| 4. An axe. | 10. A pinnacle. | 17. No. There aren't any lions in India. |
| 5. In Turkey. They are made of lava from a volcano. | 11. "Present Arms." | |
| 6. He has drawn Rugby instead of Soccer goal-posts; and there is no goal-net. | 12. Badminton. That's the game the men are playing. | |
| | 13. Yes. The animals are baboons. | |

LUCKY GUFFY LAUGHS LAST!



Tom the Juggler

BY
HARRY
KAYE

OF ALL THE TRAVELLING ENTERTAINERS WHO WANDERED THROUGH THE COUNTRYSIDE OF OLD ENGLAND, NOT ONE WAS SO NIMBLE OF FOOT, NOR SO QUICK OF HAND, AS TOM THE JUGGLER. HIS AMAZING ACROBATIC SKILL WITH SWORDS AND KNIVES DREW CROWDS OF ONLOOKERS WHEREVER HE PERFORMED

THE BIGGEST THRILL OF TOM'S SHOW WAS ALWAYS KEPT TILL LAST. THIS WAS THE GREAT KNIFE-THROWING ACT



BUT BARIC, TOM'S FRIEND AND ASSISTANT, DIDN'T EVEN FLINCH AS THE LAST KNIFE THUDDED HOME



AFTER THE SHOW, THE EXCITED TOWNSFOLK WILLINGLY DROPPED COINS INTO TOM'S BAG



AS TOM TURNED TO GO, THE MAN UTTERED A WARNING



THAT EVENING, A FEW MILES FROM THE TOWN, TOM AND BARIC STOPPED TO MAKE CAMP FOR THE NIGHT



BEFORE BARIC COULD REPLY, A BURLY HORSEMAN
APPEARED FROM AMONG THE TREES

HO, THERE-HALT,
I SAY! WHAT VAGABONDS
DARE TO LOITER ON THE
BARON'S LAND?



ONE GLANCE TOLD TOM THAT
THIS WAS UNDOUBTEDLY
CAPTAIN CORVO - THE MAN
ABOUT WHOM HE HAD BEEN
WARNED

WE ARE NO
VAGABONDS, BUT
ENTERTAINERS

THEN YOU MUST PAY
THE TAX WHICH THE BARON
DEMANDS OF TRAVELLERS.
HAND IT OVER TO
ME-QUICK!



TOM DREW HIMSELF UP
DEFIANTLY



WE PAY NO
TAX TO NORMAN
BARONS! WE ARE FREE
ENGLISHMEN!

INSTANTLY THE CAPTAIN BELLOWED A FURIOUS ORDER
TO HIS MEN

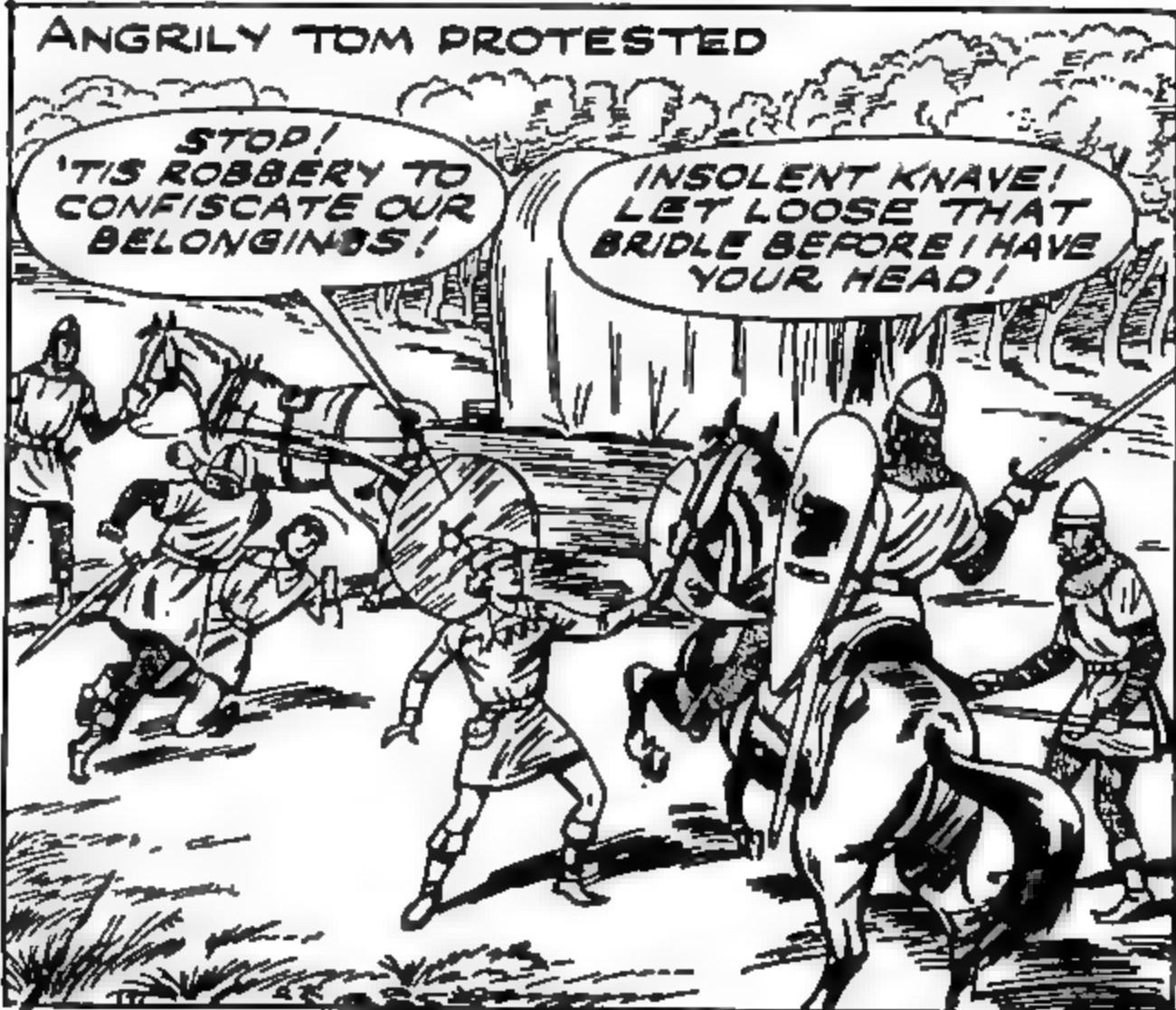
SEIZE THE WAGON AND
HORSE! WE WILL TAKE THOSE IN
LIEU OF TAXES. WE'LL SHOW
THESE DOGS WHO HOLDS
THE WHIP HAND!



ANGRILY TOM PROTESTED

STOP!
'TIS ROBBERY TO
CONFISCATE OUR
BELONGINGS!

INSOLENT KNAVE!
LET LOOSE THAT
BRIDLE BEFORE I HAVE
YOUR HEAD!



BOTH TOM AND BARIC WERE SWEEPED ASIDE,
AND THE MEN-AT-ARMS DROVE OFF WITH
THE WAGON

COME BACK!
COME BACK!
YOU'VE TAKEN ALL
THAT WE OWN IN
THIS WORLD!



A STUNNING BLOW FROM THE FLAT OF CORVO'S SWORD SENT TOM SPRAWLING

THE WAGON IS NO LONGER YOURS—IT'S THE BARON'S! BE THANKFUL THAT I SPARE YOUR LIFE!

BUT WITHOUT OUR BELONGINGS WE CANNOT MAKE A LIVING! WE SHALL STARVE AND PERISH!



THEN STARVE! TOMORROW THE BARON HOLDS A BANQUET, AND WHILE I AM FEASTING I WILL THINK OF YOU!



AS THE SOLDIERS DISAPPEARED, TOM BIT HIS LIP AND FROWNED THOUGHTFULLY. THEN A LIGHT GLEAMED IN HIS EYES, AND HE CLAPPED BARIC ON THE SHOULDER.

HEARKEN, LAD! I HAVE A PLAN TO RECOVER OLD BEN AND THE WAGON, BUT FIRST WE MUST ENTER THE CASTLE!

HOWSO? 'TIS A FORTRESS, AND GUARDED NIGHT AND DAY!

YOU WILL SEE! NO NORMAN BARON IS GOING TO CAUSE US TO STARVE!



AND THE NEXT DAY, AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE GREAT, TOWERING CASTLE—

WE ARE TWO HUMBLE ENTERTAINERS WHO WISH TO GIVE A TURN TO AMUSE THE BARON'S GUESTS AT THE BANQUET!

VERY WELL. YOU MAY PASS, GO TO THE CHAMBERLAIN AND SEEK HIS PERMISSION



TO TOM'S DELIGHT THE CHAMBERLAIN AGREED TO WATCH THEIR TRICKS. AND THEN—



GOOD—VERY GOOD! YOU MAY STAY TO ADD TO THE ENTERTAINMENT



GO ROUND BY THE STABLES AND WAIT IN THE KITCHENS. THERE YOU WILL BE GIVEN SOME FOOD

NOTHING COULD HAVE SUITED TOM BETTER. EAGERLY HE HURRIED OFF WITH BARIC

SEE-THERE IS OUR WAGON! WHEN ALL IS QUIET, TAKE FROM IT OUR SWORDS AND KNIVES AND BRING THEM TO THE BANQUETING HALL!



LATER, WHILE EATING IN THE KITCHEN, TOM REVEALED MORE OF HIS PLAN

SOMEHOW I SHALL CHALLENGE CORVO TO A DUEL. IF I WIN, THE BARON IS CERTAIN TO INVITE ME TO ASK A FAVOUR, AND YOU KNOW WHAT MY REPLY WILL BE, BARIC--I SHALL ASK FOR THE RETURN OF OLD BEN AND OUR WAGON!



'TIS A DARING SCHEME, FOR CORVO IS THE BARON'S CHAMPION. 'T'WILL TAKE MUCH SKILL TO BEAT SUCH AS HE!

AT LAST THE BANQUET BEGAN, AND TOM DID A SERIES OF FLYING SOMERSAULTS. THE BARON SMILED APPROVINGLY AND SPOKE TO CAPTAIN CORVO

THIS FELLOW IS GOOD. HE PLEASES ME

POOH--GIVE ME A MAN'S SPORT, MY LORD! A MIGHTY SWORD, AND THE STRENGTH TO WIELD IT!



IT WAS AS TOM FINISHED HIS ACT THAT CAPTAIN CORVO RECOGNISED HIM

WHY--'TIS THE UPSTART STRIPLING OF THE WOODS! YOU DARE COME HERE WITH YOUR MONKEY FROLICHS?



TOM LOOKED CORVO STRAIGHT IN THE EYES

IF YOU THINK THAT YOU COULD PROVIDE BETTER ENTERTAINMENT, LET US SEE IT!

THAT IS A CHALLENGE, CAPTAIN. HO, HO, HO! WHAT WOULDST DO?



WITHOUT HESITATION CAPTAIN CORVO STRODE ARROGANTLY TOWARDS THE FIREPLACE



HI, THERE! 'VARLETS! REST YON POKER ATOP TWO LOSS!

AS THE SERVANTS OBEYED, CORVO BROUGHT THE SWORD FLASHING DOWN WITH A HISS



BY THOR—HE HAS CUT CLEAN THROUGH IT!

BRAVO, CAPTAIN!

TOM WAITED PATIENTLY UNTIL THE SHOUTS AND CHEERING HAD DIED DOWN. THEN HE ADDRESSED THE BARON

A PRETTY STROKE, FOR SURE! BUT I ALSO AM CONSIDERED TO BE A MASTER OF THE SWORD!



YOU—A SWORDSMAN? WHAT STROKE OF THINE CAN MATCH MY CHAMPION'S?

THE JEERING VOICE OF CAPTAIN CORVO GRATED UPON THE SUDDEN SILENCE OF THE HALL

'HO, HO! BELIKE THE STRIPLING PLANS TO TRIM THE CANDLE-WICKS!



RIGHT WILLINGLY—AND NOW! BARIC—MY SCIMITAR! THAT WITH THE RAZOR EDGE

A LEAP CARRIED TOM TO THE TABLE-TOP, AND ALONG ITS LENGTH HE DANCED, WHIPPING THE THIN KEEN BLADE THROUGH THE FLICKERING WICKS!



THUS DO I TRIM THEM! THUS—AND THUS—AND THUS—

WHAT SKILL! AND STILL THEY BURN—

AND BRIGHTER THAN BEFORE!

AT THE TABLE'S-END, TOM BOUNDED TO THE FLOOR AND DREW UP IN FRONT OF CAPTAIN CORVO



AND I CAN TRIM MORE THAN CANDLE-WICKS, MY LORD! BEHOLD!

A CRY OF AMAZEMENT WENT UP AS THE SCIMITAR SHEARED THROUGH THE END OF CAPTAIN CORVO'S BEARD!



THUNDER! HE HAS TRIMMED THAT, TOO!

A ROAR OF LAUGHTER AROSE FROM THE ASSEMBLED COMPANY



HO—HO! THE STRIPLING IS TOO QUICK FOR YOU BY FAR, CAPTAIN

IN A WHISPERED ASIDE, TOM SPOKE CONFIDENTLY TO BARIC

CORVO WILL NOW CHALLENGE ME TO A DUEL. HE DARE NOT DO OTHERWISE! AND I MEAN TO WIN. FOR IN NO OTHER WAY CAN WE RECOVER OLD BEN AND OUR WAGON!



SURE ENOUGH, CAPTAIN CORVO WHIPPED UP HIS SWORD

YOU DOG OF A VAGABOND! I WILL SOON TEACH YOU NOT TO MAKE A FOOL OF ME. TAKE GUARD!



I NEED NO GUARD AGAINST SUCH AS YOU. DO YOUR WORST!

BELLOWING WITH RAGE, CAPTAIN CORVO RUSHED FORWARD LIKE A MADDENED BULL



HAVE AT YOU—AAAHH!

TOM SKIPPED NEATLY AWAY TO THE OPEN FLOOR, FROM THERE HE PITCHED HIS SCIMITAR TO BARIC



I STAND UNARMED—BUT READY!

ONCE MORE CORVO MADE A TERRIFIC SWIPE AND MISSED! FOR TOM WAS USING HIS WONDERFUL SKILL AS AN ACROBAT TO AVOID THE CAPTAIN'S FLASHING BLADE!



A CURSE ON YOU—'TIS LIKE FIGHTING WITH SHADOWS!

THE AMAZING DUEL CONTINUED, WITH CORVO AGAIN AND AGAIN FAILING TO STRIKE HOME A SINGLE BLOW, THANKS TO TOM'S FANTASTIC AGILITY



BEFORE LONG THE CAPTAIN LOWERED HIS SWORD AND PANTED FOR BREATH



STAND YOUR GROUND AND FIGHT, YOU WHELP! YOU DO BUT DELAY THE END!

I FIGHT MY OWN WAY, CAPTAIN. AND IT IS YOU WHO ARE WEARY—NOT ME!

AS CORVO LAUNCHED ANOTHER ATTACK TOM'S FOOT SLIPPED IN A POOL OF SPILLED WINE - AND DOWN HE CRASHED!



BUT TOM WRIGGLED OVER LIKE AN EEL AND DIVED BETWEEN HIS OPPONENT'S LEGS!



CORVO'S BRUTE STRENGTH AND GREAT WEIGHT DROVE THE HEAVY SWORD DEEP INTO THE WOOD OF THE DOOR!



TWICE AND THRICE THE GRIM-FACED GIANT STRUGGLED TO GET IT FREE, BUT THE BLADE HELD AS IN A VICE!



WHITE WITH RAGE, HE WHIPPED ROUND AND SPREAD OUT HIS MASSIVE, MUSCULAR ARMS

LET ME BUT GET MY HANDS UPON YOU, AND I WILL CRUSH YOU TO A PULP!

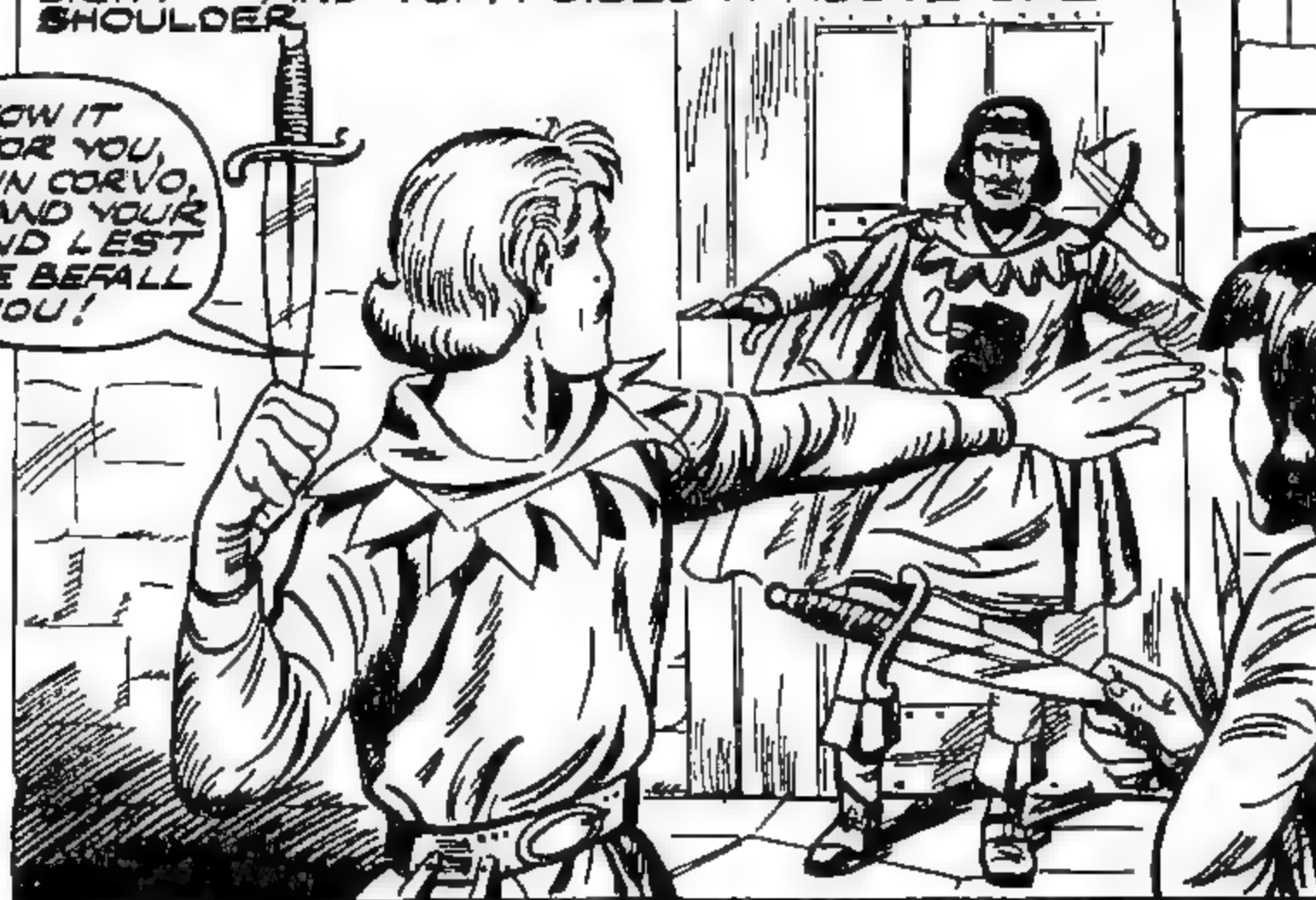


WITHOUT TURNING, TOM RAPPED OUT A COMMAND TO BARIC



BARIC HANDED ONE OVER WITH THE SPEED OF LIGHT -- AND TOM POISED IT ABOVE ONE SHOULDER

NOW IT IS FOR YOU, CAPTAIN CORVO, TO STAND YOUR GROUND LEST WORSE BEFALL YOU!



BEFORE CORVO COULD MOVE, THE FIRST KNIFE THUDDERED HOME AND PINNED HIM TO THE WALL BY THE FOLDS OF HIS CLOAK!

WHAT DEVIL'S TRICKERY IS THIS?



TOM'S HAND THEN FLASHED BACK AND FORTH LIKE A PISTON, EACH TIME SNATCHING A KNIFE FROM BARIC AND FLINGING IT WITH DEADLY ACCURACY ALL ROUND HIS FLABBERGASTED OPPONENT! FINALLY--

NOW TO COMPLETE MY WORK! BARIC--THE SCIMITAR!



AS TOM APPROACHED, CAPTAIN CORVO LET OUT A YELL OF FEAR

MERCY! MERCY! I GIVE YOU BEST! I AM A BEATEN MAN!



TOM DREW BACK WITH A TRIUMPHANT GRIN--TO BE CONGRATULATED BY THE BARON HIMSELF

WELL DONE, FELLOW. YOU HAVE GAINED A WELL-EARNED VICTORY. CUSTOM DECREES THAT YOU MAY ASK A FAVOUR OF ME. WHAT SHALL IT BE?



I CRAVE THE RETURN OF MY WAGON, HORSE AND GEAR, WHICH THIS RASCAL STOLE FROM US!



THY WISH IS GRANTED! SEE TO IT, CHAMBERLAIN--AND FILL THEIR CAPS WITH CROWNS TO HELP THEM ON THEIR WAY!

THE BARON THEN ROUNDED ON THE SHIVERING CAPTAIN CORVO--

AS FOR YOU, YOU WILL LEAVE MY CASTLE BY DAWN! NO DEFEATED MAN CAN REMAIN MY CHAMPION!



TOM GOT MORE THAN HIS HORSE AND WAGON AND A HATFUL OF CROWNS. FOR THE BARON PRESENTED TO HIM CAPTAIN CORVO'S MIGHTY SWORD!

I KNOW NOT WHAT TRICKS AND JUGGLERY YOU CAN PERFORM WITH THAT, TOM!

IT HAS DONE TRICKS ENOUGH, AND WICKED ONES! 'T WILL SERVE TO REMIND US OF THE TIME WE GAVE A PERFORMANCE IN THE CASTLE OF A BARON!



THE END



FULL MARKS for PHIDO

The
MECHANICAL
DOG

BY
VICTOR
NORMAN



PHIDO COMES A CROPPER

TAKE that dog to the kennels! His lordship will not permit it to enter here!"

Fred Forbes frowned at the contemptuous words of the florid, portly butler who faced him on the steps of Webberfaw Manor. Fred was a student detective, and the dog to which the pained-looking butler was referring was Phido, Fred's Electronic Bloodhound.

And this was not the sort of welcome Fred had been expecting!

It was natural that the butler should mistake Phido for a flesh-and-blood hound, for this scientific wonder had been specially designed by Professor Stanton Wyx, the famous scientist-detective, to have that deceptive appearance.

Phido, with his real bloodhound fur, his deep-set eyes nearly covered by his furrowed brow, his loping gait and swinging tail looked the real thing, except when examined critically and closely.

"Better not speak too sharply," Fred warned the butler, "Phido doesn't like it. I'm Fred Forbes, and I've come on the instructions of Professor Stanton Wyx, the famous detective. I'm to make preliminary investigations into the mysterious theft of Earl Webberfaw's picture!"

Fred looked keenly at the butler. Until he had uncovered enough facts to narrow down the search for the culprit, everyone in the Manor was a suspect. The butler might even be an accomplice.

"Don't look at me like that," snapped the butler. "I'm not the thief. Anyway, if you want to come in and speak to his lordship, first you'll have to take

the dog along to the kennels or stables, and lock him up!"

Fred did not argue with the butler. He didn't want to be separated from Phido, and whether Earl Webberfaw liked it or not, the Electronic Bloodhound was certainly going to cross the threshold.

All that was needed to make the faithful Phido mount the steps, and push into the hall past the butler, was the word of command from Fred.

"Up, Phido..." said Fred. "Forward, boy!"

"Not on your life!" said the butler, folding his arms as though he meant business!

"Just as you wish," grinned Fred.

If that was the way he wanted it, Fred decided, that was the way it would be.

Without faltering Phido marched on, his electric motors spinning noiselessly. It was a doggy walk, with head down. He walked straight at the butler and, as he felt the man's resistance, Phido's power supply built up suitably.

Thud! The butler was down, and over him walked Phido.

As Phido trod on his middle, the butler let out a hissing sound like a punctured balloon, but his wildest yell came when the Electronic Bloodhound trod on his face.

"Halt," cried Fred, as the mechanical dog moved on. At once Phido halted, motors idle.

The butler scrambled up, shaking with fury.

"I shall report this to the Earl," he raged. "His lordship will..."

But he got no further. At that moment an elderly, white-haired man, wearing a purple smoking jacket, came shuffling forward down the corridor.

"What is going on here, and who the dickens are you?" he demanded of Fred. "And what in thunder is this monstrous dog doing in my hall? Huh?"

It was obviously Earl Webberfaw, and Fred explained that he had been sent in advance by Professor Stanton Wyx, to make preliminary investigations with Phido.

Of course the nobleman did not know that Phido was an electronic and mechanical wonder. That was always to be kept secret. Consequently, he didn't understand what kind of investigating Phido could do.

"I don't see the use of the bloodhound, my boy," he said. "We are not trailing a runaway you know, but looking for the rascal who stole my famous painting, 'The Hunted Stag.' It's worth five thousand pounds."

"Right, sir," said Fred briskly. "And that's why

The Boy 'Tec's Bloodhound was Made of Metal, Valves and Wire!

I'm here with Phido. Phido will examine the staff, and check them over to see if they're honest!"

Earl Webberfaw gaped, and Mullins, the butler, gave a muffled snort of ill concealed rage.

"How can a dog examine my staff?" growled the Earl.

"Ah. That is confidential, sir," smiled Fred. "But he knows his job, and if the staff can be lined up—he's ready."

The Earl growled and mumbled, like a dog with a bone. But he had to obey, for Stanton Wyx had been called in by the insurance company who were liable for the loss of the picture. The money would not be paid unless the detective could not recover the picture and also decided that it had been genuinely stolen.

There was possibility, Fred thought, that the theft had been carried out with the aid of someone inside the house. So the butler, footman, chauffeur, gardeners, and all the other servants had to be questioned.

That was where Phido came in. But, of course, Earl Webberfaw had no idea how. He had never heard of a dog questioning servants.

But then he'd never met a dog like Phido before. For Phido could speak—at least the tiny amplifying equipment inside his body could repeat the words Fred breathed into the small button mike in his lapel. Usually this questioning so startled suspects that often the guilty one was tricked into making a false move. This was Fred's present plan.

But Earl Webberfaw spoke first!

"This is madness! Madness!" he snapped. "But I'll soon test the dog. He's supposed to have a wonderful power of scent, eh?"

Fred smiled. Phido had an even more wonderful power of scent than an ordinary dog. For Stanton Wyx, after months of experimenting, had perfected what he called a teleofactor—a device capable of picking up and analysing remote scents. Phido was equipped with the necessary apparatus. There was a detector in his nose, and the rest of the mechanism was stored inside his massive body.

"He certainly has, my lord," said Fred.

"Right!" said the nobleman, with a wink at the butler. "Mullins, fetch a pair of gloves from my room."

Fred wondered what the idea was, but when the butler returned with a pair of gloves, he found out.

"Now... see if the dog recognises these as mine," said Earl Webberfaw. "If he doesn't, then he can clear out, my boy, and you with him. Show him the gloves and tell him to find the owner."

Fred smiled. It was too easy.

"Here, Phido," he said. "Good dog..."

Phido wagged his tail as he always did when the words "good dog" reached a certain part of his electronic brain.

"Find the owner. Whose is it, Phido?" asked Fred. It was a code signal to the mechanical dog.

Phido sniffed at the gloves. His small electric fan worked, sucking in a keen rush of air. In fact, there was quite a draught.

"Sniffs like a small typhoon," gasped the astounded nobleman.

Phido gave a low whine of excitement. The smell had registered. He now had to find the most powerful generator of that scent—the owner of the gloves!

Every eye was fixed on him. If he turned to Earl Webberfaw and went straight to him, he had proved his worth.

"Off!" said Fred confidently.

Fred grinned, but not for long. Instead of making for the Earl, Phido went past him head down, sniffing busily.

A gasp came from Fred, and then from Mullins and the other servants a roar of laughter.

"He's making for the kitchen," scoffed Earl Webberfaw.

Fred stood aghast as Phido, increasing speed, trotted off down the corridor! He had failed.

Then Fred gave an angry cry.

"It's a trick! They're not your gloves!"

"Oh, yes, they are," said the Earl in triumph.

"He's a fraud—and so are you too. Get out!"

PHIDO DISAPPEARS

FRED stood there amazed. He had never known Phido fail before. But this was certainly failure. What had gone wrong? The electronic hound's mechanism was working all right, for he had set off with great confidence, but in the wrong direction!

Although Earl Webberfaw jeeringly had suggested that Phido was making for the kitchen, Fred knew that food meant nothing to Phido. The electronic hound preferred batteries to beef-steak, and machine oil to biscuits!

Fred decided to follow. After all, this might be a trick. If he followed Phido, the electronic bloodhound might lead him to someone who really owned the gloves.

It was obvious that Mullins at least did not want Phido to investigate, and there might be some reason why the nobleman, too, would rather have him out of the house.

At the end of the hall, Phido halted. A door barred his way and as he bumped his nose against it, his motor switch went off, causing him to idle and whine.

Fred rushed to his rescue, and opened the door as the Earl and the butler came in hot pursuit.

When Fred opened the door, Phido marched into the room.

It was the Manor library. The walls were

shelved from floor to ceiling, and stacked with books that had been in the family for hundreds of years. There were oil paintings on the walls, and over the fireplace there was a large, gaping empty golden frame.

It was from that frame that the picture had been stolen.

Phido went without hesitation to a large section of the book shelves.

"Stop that dog," shouted Earl Webberfaw.

There was a strange note of alarm in his tone.

Fred let Phido go on but, as though by accident, barred the way of the Earl. Straight to the shelves Phido went, and there halted. But he did not merely whine—he howled. It was a protracted, pathetic howl.

Yowowowowow!

"Drive him away, Mullins," yelled the owner of the Manor.

Mullins seized a poker from the old-fashioned grate, and rushed forward with the obvious intention of striking Phido.

Fred rushed to intervene, but the butler hurled him aside.

"If you strike him, he'll tear you to bits," shouted Fred. "Turn, Phido . . ."

As the butler neared him, Phido turned. His mechanical jaws opened, showing white, dangerous teeth. His nose curled, and he snarled viciously.

With eyes staring, the butler stopped. He held the poker raised, but did not strike. He was no match for a heavy dog, unless he got his blow in first, and that didn't seem likely. Slowly he lowered the poker.

Earl Webberfaw, Fred saw, was pale through his purplish colour. He too looked scared.

"That dog is crazy," he muttered.

But Fred, aware of the nobleman's alarm, and the butler's ferocious reaction, knew that Phido was working well. Phido had found a clue that scared the butler.

The library wall held a secret. That section of the book-case that attracted Phido might, in fact, be a door—and if so what lay behind it . . .?

Fred felt a thrill of excitement. Whose gloves were they? Phido had not failed. Obviously the gloves were not the Earl's. They belonged to someone else, and Phido had tracked that someone to a secret hiding place.

"The dog's not so stupid as you think," said Fred coolly. "I think your butler made a mistake about the gloves, my Lord. They belong to someone else, and that someone is in hiding behind the panel. It seems to me that your butler knows that, and he is scared. Phido in his first move has found a clue."

Fred hurried from the room. In the corridor he found three or four of the servants.

"Just a minute all of you," said Fred, and led

them back to the part of the hall near the doorway.

Fred had a few questions to ask. He wanted to know how well they knew Mullins, and how long they had been in Earl Webberfaw's service.

To his surprise, he found that Mullins had caused the dismissal of the entire staff a month ago. They were all new. They had been hired from a London agency because Earl Webberfaw had wanted no local people on his staff.

Fred thought swiftly, and with startling suddenness a suspicion came to him. He whirled and hurried back to the library.

But a shock awaited Fred. He saw Earl Webberfaw, but there was no sign of the butler, Mullins. Worse—there was no sign of Phido!

Fred stood in the doorway, and gasped in alarm!

"Where's Phido?" he jerked out.

The nobleman smiled.

"Your faithful bloodhound likes me," he smiled.

"I found that, when I gave an order, he obeyed me."

That shook Fred. He remembered then that he had left Phido so switched that in fact he would have obeyed a reasonable order. He would have stood up and followed a command of "come on."

"Gosh! Where is he then?" jerked out Fred.

His Lordship laughed.

"Not such a ferocious bloodhound as we thought! Meek as a lamb in fact! Mullins has taken him down to the kitchen—"

Without waiting to hear more Fred turned back to the door.

"Which way to the kitchen?" he gasped.

"Turn right, through the green baize door."

Fred charged through the door, into the kitchen . . . and there, too, he found the grinning Mullins.

"Where's Phido?" rapped Fred.

"Phido, dear gentle old dog. Why, I gave him a chunk of our dog's meat—and off he went growling! Straight out into the bushes with it."

The butler pointed through the open door across the spacious grounds to the trees and the shrubbery. The land spread for a great distance, and a dog could have wandered anywhere.

But Fred did not rush in pursuit.

The butler, as he well knew, was lying. Any ordinary bloodhound might indeed have gone off growling, with meat in his teeth. But not Phido. Meat meant nothing to Phido!

As Fred hesitated, undecided for the moment what to do, a gardener came into the kitchen.

"The police have arrived," he called to Mullins.

"And someone called Professor Stanton Wyx."

"Stanton Wyx!" groaned Fred.

If Stanton Wyx learned that Phido, his wonderful and highly valuable invention was missing . . .!

There was only one thing to do; Fred had to act on a hunch. He could find Phido if the dog was reasonably near, and find him quickly he must.

IT was an ugly situation for Fred. Just when he had thought that he was building up a good case, Phido had been stolen.

And he could only blame himself. He should not have left Phido in such a state that the electronic bloodhound would obey anyone's orders!

He returned to the library, and then groaned, as he heard the Professor's voice!

The nobleman was in smiling good humour, greeting the detective scientist, and the police inspector, who accompanied him.

"This is a pleasure, indeed," he said. "And here is your young assistant, professor, with the bloodhound."

Fred met the professor's smiling nod, and then saw the keen, steely eyes of the scientist detective harden.

"Well, Fred, where's Phido?" he asked.

Fred smiled grimly.

"Let's wait until the butler, Mullins, comes in, sir," he said. "Then I think I'll have a surprise for you."

The butler, suave and calm, followed him in.

"Most unfortunate about the bloodhound," said the butler. "I offered him some meat and he took it in his jaws, growled and bolted."

Fred saw the professor's eyebrows go up, in surprise.

"Bolted with meat?" he said, and looked enquiringly at Fred.

Fred laughed.

Fred's brain always worked quickly in an emergency, and now he had sorted out his ideas. He had found the answers that he had been lacking. Earl Webberfaw's manner gave him his last clue, and the quick look the nobleman gave Mullins.

"The bloodhound is on the job, sir," he said to Stanton Wyx, "and has solved the mystery. These two rascals thought they had hidden him—for ever."

With a start the nobleman wheeled on him.

"You dare call me a rascal?"

"Great scott, Fred," ejaculated the professor. "Why call Earl Webberfaw a rascal?"

"I'm not," said Fred.

"Were you not referring to me as a rascal?" demanded the nobleman, bristling with rage.

"I was," admitted Fred. "But you're not Earl Webberfaw!"

"Wha-a-at?"

There was a hush.

"He's an impostor, sir," said Fred briskly, turning to the detective. "Ask the inspector if he can identify him!"

The inspector frowned as the nobleman frothed with rage.

"Well, no. His Lordship is something of a recluse. There is a resemblance, but—er—as to swearing that this man is Earl Webberfaw."

"Then where do you think he is, Fred?" asked the professor.

Fred pointed to the section of bookcase where Phido had halted when following the scent of the gloves.

"I'm pretty certain he and Phido are hidden behind there," he said.

Fred spoke into his buttonhole mike.

"Phido—bark," he commanded.

In muffled tone a bark came from behind the bookcase.

"Open that book-case," rapped the inspector to the fake Earl. "Or I'll break it down!"

There was no alternative. Grimly the fake Earl removed one of the heavy books, and the whole section of book-case swung open.

There in full view stood the faithful Phido, while, on the floor, bound and gagged, lay the real Earl, an elderly man. Immediately Fred noticed that he bore a close resemblance to the impostor. In a roll at his side was the missing picture.

Freed, he sat up and was revived. But there was no need for him to tell his story. Fred switched on Phido's replay apparatus, and from him came the words exchanged by the fake Earl and the butler during Fred's absence.

"If he opens that bookcase he'll find Earl Webberfaw. We must move him in case..." the butler was heard to say.

"Pah! Get rid of the dog and they won't worry. No one suspects I'm not the Earl—so no one will look for him. You take the dog away. Here—get up... there—he has got up. Tell him to follow you... just say 'come here'... See, what did I say? He's following you... Wait. I've got a better idea. Open the bookcase and we'll order him in there..."

It was enough to justify arresting the impostor, who proved to be the real nobleman's cousin.

Later, Earl Webberfaw told how they had attacked him and how he had been bound and gagged, and kept prisoner!

The crooks had intended to keep him prisoner until the case blew over. Then they meant to make off with the insurance money and the picture. But the impostors had been too clever in giving Phido the real nobleman's glove as a scent. For Phido had discovered the hiding place of the real owner.

"Well handled, Fred," smiled the professor afterwards. "You two make a fine partnership. Keep at it!"

"You bet, eh, Phido?" Fred grinned. "Wherever there's a case we'll crack it."

ZACK DAWSON—WILD WEST SCOUT

BY
BRIAN
LEIGH



COMANCHE VENGEANCE!

ZACK DAWSON, famous Wild West scout, sat motionless in the saddle. He gazed unblinkingly down a heat-hazed hill slope, to where the trail ran white and crooked on the far side of the Little Bear river.

The heat was ferocious, but Zack did not heed it. He was listening. Surefoot, Zack's stallion bay, flicked an ear and shifted uneasily. He too could hear the sound which had brought Zack to a halt, a sound that could mean danger. It was the rapid drumming of distant hooves.

"About four or five riders, moving lickety-split," Zack calculated. He spoke half to himself and half to the now restless bay.

"Now what'd make 'em move so fast in this heat? Trouble I guess. Okay feller, let's take a look-see!"

He nudged the bay into motion, and horse and rider began to edge cagily down the loose-surfaced slope to the river.

Zack's eyes had narrowed. He could sense trouble, and he wasn't surprised. One way and another, there had been plenty of trouble in Comanche redskin territory of late.

Only a few weeks before, Chief Howling Wolf and

ten Comanche war-parties had been defeated in a savage battle with the 12th U.S. Cavalry. Led by buglers, the Cavalry had sabre-charged and scattered the Comanches, when they had attacked Fort Greyson. Howling Wolf had been killed, and the Comanches had sullenly signed a peace treaty. This had pleased the Government, but it didn't satisfy Zack!

He was a scout. He knew the tribes, their ways, and he knew they wouldn't take this lying down. Already one rumour had reached him that gave him cause for much thought!

It was said that the Comanches awaited a certain sign. They sought a Spirit which could lead them to destroy the White Men in battle. And any day now they reckoned to have it.

"Heck alone knows what it can be!" Zack exclaimed. "But trouble's on the way. That's for sure!"

The fast approaching hoof beats were growing steadily louder. Then to the far side of the Little Bear river, the cause of them suddenly burst into view.

A cavalry trooper, dusty and dishevelled, was riding like the wind, sabre in hand, with four painted

He Brought Peace to the Palefaces by Working "Magic" with a Battered Bugle!

Comanches hightailing it after him. The pursuers, although armed with carbines, made no effort to use them. They uttered no shrieks or war-whoops, but rode in deadly, murderous silence. Their lances were poised to run the fugitive through.

Zack took in the situation at a glance. With a wild yell, he sent Surefoot at full gallop for the river. At the same instant, he slipped his 30-30 carbine from the saddle boot.

Still the Comanches maintained their puzzling silence. And, in one last burst of speed, they drew level with the fugitive. Whirling, the trooper cut one lance right through with a sabre blow. Then his horse crashed down under him, and the pursuers, howling triumph, leapt from their mounts to where he sprawled.

Whoosh!

Water sprayed skywards, as Zack's speeding bay forded the shallows of the Little Bear river. Using one hand, he pressed the 30-30 to his shoulder, and fired with snap-shooting speed.

Cordite flame lanced the heat-haze. A brave, about to bury his knife in the half-senseless trooper, staggered sideways, before pitching into the river. But another Comanche returned Zack's fire almost as fast.

Surefoot stumbled! The next Zack knew, he was hurled sideways into four foot of water. By the time he struggled to his feet again, the scene on the far bank had changed.

The three remaining Comanches were in full flight, riding hard and with one waving something that glittered. The buffalo pony of the dead brave stayed behind, while the trooper, whom Zack now recognised as a youngster called Daly, was clambering shakily to his feet.

"Thanks, Zack. Sure lucky you happened along," he called. "You okay?"

"Reckon so. Wet mebbe—nothing more," Zack answered, checking Surefoot for injuries. With relief, he found none. "How did this shindig start up?"

He waded ashore, leading Surefoot.

Daly spoke swiftly. His job had been to ride from Fort Greyson to a Cavalry Post with the weekly sealed orders; he had been unescorted on account of the Peace Treaty recently signed.

"Then the Comanches rode down on me," he continued. "I had a start. So I made a run for it, as we've been ordered to avoid clashes. I lost my gun when it jolted out of my holster. Ain't no more to tell. You know the rest!"

Zack said nothing. He usually talked little, but always thought plenty. Right now, there was a great deal he did not understand.

"You say you were carrying sealed orders. You still got them, son?"

"Sure! They're in my tunic. Do you reckon the

Comanches were after them—until you scared them off?" Daly asked, frowning.

"Nope. You see, I never scared them off." Zack said simply. "They had plenty o' time to make a fight of it. When I was thrown, they had the 'drop' on me. The Comanches are anything but cowards—yet they ran. Why? That's what I'd like to know. And why didn't they shoot you down earlier on?"

Zack frowned to himself as he thought the questions over.

The Comanches had avoided shooting and whooping because noise carried and their attack on the trooper was meant to be secret. That was plain. But there was something else.

"The Comanches weren't jest after you," Zack continued. "They were after something you carried. And I figger they got it. Something so dead important to them that they made off without trying to settle me. Check your possessions. What have you lost?"

Daly made the check. He suddenly grinned broadly!

"The only thing I'm light of is an old Cavalry bugle. I was taking it in for replacement because it was cracked. Don't tell me they were after that!" he exclaimed.

Zack drew a sharp breath. He recalled a glinting object one of the braves had carried while retreating. That must have been the bugle. A strange suspicion awoke in his mind.

He remembered the rumours—the mysterious Spirit the Comanches were said to be awaiting to lead them into battle. He remembered too, how bugles had led the Cavalry charge which doomed Chief Howling Wolf's war-parties to shattering defeat in their attack on the Fort.

There was, of course, the chance he was wrong. But things added up. He knew the Redskin mind, its superstitious nature, and love of symbols and omens. Could the Comanches believe that a bugle-call was the White Man's magic, which had spelled disaster for Howling Wolf's braves?

"Daly, you take my horse! I'll use the dead brave's pony! We gotta' recover that bugle, and fast. Come on!"

Zack reached the grazing buffalo pony in two raking strides.

Daly stared at him.

"Heck, are you fooling? The bugle's not worth five dollars?"

"No? If my hunch is right, it could easily be worth the life of every white settler between here and the frontier. So git moving!" Zack's voice was harsh in its urgency. "The way I figger it, the blast of that bugle is meant to lead the whole Comanche tribe into war!"

SHORT-CUT TO FREEDOM

WITHIN a few minutes, Zack and Daly were mounted and riding hard in the direction the Comanche braves had taken. Daly straddled Surefoot and watched with admiration how the lean Western Scout handled the bare-back buffalo pony. To ride Indian fashion, without even a saddle blanket, required a skill very few Cavalry-men had. And the buffalo pony had only a single jaw rein.

"Where are we making for?" Daly asked breathlessly.

For a moment, Zack failed to answer, and Daly himself guessed the truth.

They were following tracks—tracks which, to Daly, were completely invisible. Though he stared hard at the sun-baked, dusty trail, he was unable to read what Zack's steel-grey eyes could.

"They headed East here. The mesquite scrub is broken, where they turned their horses," Zack called back. "They tried to leave a false trail by back-doubling to ride in their own tracks."

He swerved his mount round a juniper stump, and followed a stream-bed shaded by willows and cottonwood.

Daly spurred after him.

"About that bugle. Suppose you're wrong?" he said.

"I sure hope I am. Only I don't think so. In any case we're gonna play safe and get it back," Zack said grimly. "I can smell war! I ain't boasting—I jest understand Comanches. I aim to overtake those three riders and kinda' persuade them the bugle is ours."

"That means a fight to the death, Zack!"

"It figgers. Here, you better have my six-gun." Zack passed it over. "Don't lose it. It cost me a lot. I bought it from a rogue trader, way back East."

Daly grinned. He liked Zack, liked his dry way of speaking.

Zack spoke again suddenly.

"The riders turned again here. They're making for the reservation at Cougar Butte—that's Chief Arrow Eye's territory."

"Then it is trouble! He's the brother of Howling Wolf, whom the Cavalry killed," Daly said.

Now the bugle clue became more ominous than ever. Arrow Eye had supplied four war-parties at the earlier defeat.

"He's brave, proud—and a fighter. He means to avenge his brother's death. We have to cut off them braves afore they get to Cougar Butte with the bugle."

Zack swerved the buffalo pony up the hill slope.

"That's impossible. They've got a start, and they'll be riding like blazes," Daly answered.

Zack went crashing on through bushes and buck-brush. He fanned the pony's hide, and began a

climb that looked almost vertical. His jaw was set grimly.

"There's a mine shaft—the old Silver Blaze—that cuts right through the hillside. The Injuns won't use it. They think it's haunted—bad medicine," he grunted. "But we're gonna take it. It'll save three miles of uphill trail."

He failed to add that the short-cut brought a possible risk of the derelict shaft caving in on them. Danger and risks were part of Zack's normal life.

The heat grew worse. Sweat lathered the horses' sides as their riders urged them on, shale powdering earthwards. A startled loafer wolf broke cover, and then vanished like a grey shadow. At last the derelict entrance of the old Silver Blaze shaft-tunnel came into view.

Zack swerved the reluctant pony towards it. Then, slowing to a trot, he and Daly rode into its gloom. They moved in single-file, as the clammy darkness closed about them. The sound of hooves re-echoed and seemed to deafen their ears.

The tunnel was straight. In the distance a grey oblong of light showed where the shaft opened out again from the far hillside. A light fall of earth brought Daly's heart to his mouth.

"Quicken pace! The roof ain't too strong," Zack's voice boomed back from ahead of him.

"Yeah, so I reckoned!" Daly felt the earth patter down on his neck again.

Where were the three Comanches now, he wondered. Would he and Zack head them off?

As they rode faster, the far end of the tunnel drew nearer and nearer. It formed a frame for the view of the landscape beyond. And, at that instant, they saw the three Comanches flash across it. The trio followed the trail and was still riding furiously.

"There they are! Giddyap." Zack yelled.

He urged the pony into a crazed, headlong gallop. Throwing caution to the wind, he and Daly clattered, flat out, for the far tunnel opening.

The daylight drew nearer. Vaguely, just inside the mouth of the tunnel, Zack noticed a mass of strange puff-ball fungus. It was yellow and covered the roof, walls and floor, but Zack pushed it from his mind. They had to catch the redskins.

Then the two had reached the end of the tunnel. What followed was unexpected and disastrous. As the pounding hooves ploughed into the strange fungus, the puff balls burst. An acrid yellow cloud, like sour pollen dust rose from them.

The dust enveloped the riders. It stuck to Zack's damp clothes and powdered the sweating flanks of the horses. And where it landed on moist skin, it burnt like fire!

The panicked horses reared, whinnying. Zack's mouth seemed on fire, and the searing dust in his eyes all but blinded him. Rearing and jibbing, the horses plunged from the tunnel-opening amidst a

huge yellow cloud.

Their attention attracted by the whinnying horses, the three Comanches saw the pursuers. They swerved their mounts to one side and, yelling mockingly, rode on for Cougar Butte at a tangent. Their change of course took them further from the two men who had so grimly pursued!

Even Surefoot could not withstand the agony of the queer fungus-powder and Daly was almost thrown. Zack's buffalo pony twisted and turned like a mad thing, while his half-blinded rider battled to keep on the bare back.

By the time the horses were under control again, the Comanches were well ahead and zig-zagging through the cover of cottonwoods. Desperately Zack and Daly rode after them, in an all-out effort to get close enough to take a clear shot.

"Ride! ride! We gotta' recover that bugle!" Zack's voice rang in Daly's ears.

"There ain't a chance," the trooper replied, through clenched teeth.

He spoke the truth. Ahead of them, the Comanches had suddenly ridden down a tree dotted slope, to where a great clearing opened out between canyon walls. Zack and Daly reined back, with shocked gasps, at what now met their gaze.

Assembled in the great clearing were hundreds of war-painted warriors; braves and horses formed a milling and colourful circle. There were hide tepees

and wigwams, bearing the signs of many minor Comanche chieftains. But everywhere was the grim war colour—black!

On a black horse in the very centre of the circle sat Chief Arrow Eye, wearing full head-dress and porcupine quills. He was obviously waiting—and for what it was easy to see. Towards him, shrieking in triumph, rode the three Comanche braves. The one carrying the bugle flourished it on high, and a throaty murmur of awe came from the mighty assembly.

"Zack, it's jest as you feared!" Daly breathed, his face strangely pale.

He pointed to a brave standing near Arrow Eye.

"You see that coyote! At one time he acted as a scout for the cavalry. He knows how to play a bugle. Not well—but enough," he said thickly. "When he blows, I reckon it's the signal for war—jest like you said."

Zack nodded. For a moment he was tempted to risk a shot at the renegade bugler, but realised it was too difficult to be sure of success.

"What now? Shall we ride and try to give the alarm?" Daly said.

"That won't stop an Indian War," Zack reminded. "It won't stop a wave of bloodshed that can easily bring in the Kiowa tribes to the Comanches' aid!"

There was only the two of them, Zack realised, while below was the full might of Arrow Eye's



As Zack and Daly galloped out of the tunnel, their horses' hooves burst the puff balls and caused clouds of pollen dust to fill the air. Little did the pals realise the effect that dust was going to have on their quest!

squadrons. Yet somehow Zack had to prevent the bugle from giving its dreadful signal for war.

"Daly, can you play a bugle?" Zack's grey eyes were glittering.

"Why—yeah! I can play." replied the baffled Daly.

"Good! Then throw yore gun down and start to ride for the assembly. I'll be beside you. Keep your hands empty and in front of you. I'll do any talking—if we live that long!" Zack went on quietly.

He tossed his 30-30 carbine aside, nudged the pony's ribs, and suddenly rode into full view down the hill-slope!

"Reckon I've an idea," he drawled. "If it works, there'll be no war, and we may even stay alive too. If it doesn't work, they'll play the bugle—and hundreds will die before moonrise. But one thing's certain. We're going to git ourselves captured!"

THE BUGLE SOUNDS

THERE was a silence like death, as the two unarmed white men began to ride down the slope towards the clearing. An icy hand seemed to have gripped Daly inside and was squeezing his stomach to numbness. He glanced sideways and envied Zack for the courage revealed by a calm, expressionless face.

Daly had risked his life many times on active service. But this was different. Every eye in the great war assembly below was on them. Impassively the Comanches watched, knowing full well that the visitors could not escape them.

Had Zack or Daly batted an eyelid, made a false move, or even given a suggestion of turning back, a dozen marksmen would have riddled them with arrows and bullets. But the Comanches were fearless themselves and respected fearlessness in others. Their silence was a tribute to the courage of the approaching men.

All this Daly understood. What he did not understand was how Zack could possibly hope to prevent the war-squadrons riding. What was Zack's plan? What use could any plan possibly be now?

Daly swallowed hard. He hoped his face was as expressionless and calm as Zack's, but he doubted it. This was the most cold-blooded way of going to certain death he could imagine.

The bugle had still not been blown. Arrow Eye now held it. His gaze was on Zack, his own proud face showing no feeling.

"Arrow Eye, I see you!" Zack greeted, and held up one hand.

"Why you come here, Paleface?" the chief replied haughtily. "We take the war-path soon. When the gold horn sings its battle song for victory, we ride against the Palefaces—your people. But

first we make sure you can give no warning!"

Daly said nothing. From the corner of his eye, he glimpsed the stir caused by war-painted warriors moving towards them. Zack coolly dismounted, and Daly breathlessly followed.

"Sound the tongue of war!" Arrow-eye rasped to the renegade bugler. "Let the Great Spirit, which helped the White Men to defeat us before, now cry out in victory for our warriors. With the Golden Horn on our side we cannot be beaten."

He thrust the bugle into the renegade's hand.

"O Chief, you speak falsely!" Zack thundered. "The White Man's Golden Horn will lead you only to death and defeat!"

Arrow Eye caught his breath. Quick as light, a Comanche brave sprang at Zack, and swung murderously with a tomahawk!

Zack ducked. He stepped under the upraised arm, and slammed his fist into a coppery midriff.

"That's done it. We're finished now!" Daly thought, and swung to meet the snarling braves who suddenly bounded towards them.

But Arrow Eye halted the rush.

"Back! Let the White Warrior speak. He knows he must die—but not till I order," he harshly commanded. "First, I wish to know why he risked death to come here. He is no fool! No man would throw his life away without cause."

The massed warriors stirred restlessly; they were ready for battle. Arrow Eye's burning gaze turned on Zack.

"You tell me I speak falsely. For that you shall die slowly. But speak on!" he ordered.

Zack nodded. Blood ran from his cheek, where the tomahawk had just grazed him.

"O Chief, let me prove my words. The Spirit of the Golden Horn will never speak victory for the red man," he answered. "I will show you."

He stepped forward, and boldly took the bugle from the renegade's hands.

There was another murmur. Savage braves looked to Arrow Eye, seeking his signal for destroying the foolhardy white man. But Arrow Eye, deeply superstitious, was too interested now to give that sign.

Zack held the mouth-piece of the bugle against him. He stroked it, and then held it up. The sun's light reflected on the bell, and the coppery metal glowed red in the rays.

"Red—the colour of blood," he said calmly.

"So be it! But it will be the Palefaces' blood. That is no proof," Arrow Eye sneered.

He glanced at his ready warriors. Zack noticed the glance and spoke swiftly, in a desperate effort to forestall the call to attack.

"Let your man try to sound the horn. Its powerful spirit will give a sign that defeat awaits you. You will never defeat the Long Knives. Their

medicine is all-powerful! Here is your proof. Watch, mighty Arrow Eye!"

Zack thrust the bugle back to the renegade.

"Blow! The Great War Spirit in the Horn will strike against you as proof. Blow!" he shouted.

There was a deathly hush. Every face turned towards the uneasy renegade.

"That is fool talk!" the man mouthed and raised the bugle to his moistened lips.

Daly watched fascinated. He felt sure Zack was bluffing, yet the confidence of the frontier scout almost made him believe him. He saw the bugler swell his chest and begin to puff out his cheeks . . .

But no note came! Instead, the renegade gave a frightened scream of pain, and flung the bugle away from him.

"It burns! My mouth is on fire!"

His shriek drew a moan of fear from the onlookers.

"Give the Horn to me!" Arrow Eye rasped.

Zack recovered it, and passed it to Arrow Eye. The Chief raised the mouthpiece to his lips.

His eyes widened. Another gust of fear swept the massed warriors. For with a cry of surprise and pain, the Comanche Chieftain hurled the bugle down, and clasped his mouth, his eyes watering.

"White man, you speak true. The Horn burns!" he gasped.

Zack said nothing. Slowly he recovered the bugle and passed it to Daly. He carefully wiped the dirt from it with the kerchief he wore.

"Spirit of Great War Horn will not burn Paleface. In battle it always leads them to victory," Zack called ringingly. "Watch and listen! Daly, sound the charge!"

Daly squared himself. Doubtfully, he raised the bugle to his lips—and was almost astonished to experience nothing unusual. Next moment, the sound of the Cavalry Charge blared out to make the echoes ring back.

The bugle was cracked, yet its shrill notes were the more blood-stirring for it. Cries of fear came from the warriors and Arrow Eye himself.

"Arrow Eye, the Mighty Spirit has spoken," shouted Zack. "Only the Palefaces it serves. Attack them and you will again meet defeat. Why spill brave blood for nothing?"

The Comanche Chief remained silent. Zack could almost guess what he was thinking.

"You signed a Peace Treaty." Zack was determined to ram home the advantage. "Why not keep your Comanche honour and forget war? Let

there remain peace between your people and my people. Why destroy your tribes in a useless war you cannot possibly win?"

"So be it! We are afraid of no man—but we cannot fight against spirits," Arrow Eye answered slowly. "You were a brave man to come here to do this. You and your friend, the Long Knife, may go your way. My people shall return to their tepees in peace."

And already the frightened assembly was scattering. They gazed in superstitious awe at the two White Men and the battered old bugle.

Zack saluted Arrow Eye, Indian fashion, and then gave Daly a sharp, meaning nudge.

"The danger's over. Let's vamoose." He swung back on to Surefoot. "You take the buffalo pony. I'll fix you with a saddle-blanket later. But right now, let's get on the move."

The pair rode up the hill slope in silence. Zack paused at the top to recover his six-gun and carbine. Then they rode back to the trail.

"But how, Zack! By Hokey—how?" Daly exploded. "I don't get how you worked it?"

"Oh, the burning, you mean? Heck, that was dead easy," Zack grinned.

He halted his horse. Deliberately he brushed from the lining of his buckskin garb a cloud of yellowish powder. He beat more from his pockets and boots.

"It's the powder from that fungus in the mining tunnel. It burns against moist skin. Remember?" he reminded. "Shucks, all I did was to press the bugle's mouth-piece against the powder on my clothes before the renegade and Arrow Eye tried their luck with it. Before you blew it, though, waal—I jest wiped the mouthpiece plumb clean!"

"So that was it! The powder on their damp lips gave them gee-up," Daly echoed. "Phew, that was clever. That was right, goldurned smart."

Zack shrugged. The fear of war was over, at least, this time. Already he was thinking of the next task that might be awaiting him, somewhere along the wide frontier. He began to whistle softly. He forgot the bugle, forgot past dangers and rode contentedly on.

When Daly finally left him, he was still whistling. With a smile of admiration, the trooper watched Zack and Surefoot vanish into the wild territory they both served and loved. They were truly a part of the untamed West.

CAPTAIN CONDOR — SPACE DETECTIVE

BY FRANK S. PEPPER

IT WAS THE YEAR 3005, AND CAPTAIN CONDOR OF THE SPACE PATROL WAS VISITING STRANGE WORLDS AMONG DISTANT STARS. THE OBJECT OF HIS FAR-REACHING EXPEDITION WAS TO COLLECT RARE ANIMALS FOR EARTH'S ZOOS. HIS CREW INCLUDED TWO PALS NAMED JASON AND MIKE. THE SPACE-SHIP HAD LANDED ON A REMOTE PLANET TO PICK UP A PAIR OF WOOLLY TIGRONS AND A COUPLE OF GIANT SWORDBIRDS WHEN A RADIO FLASH BROUGHT ASTOUNDING NEWS AND FRESH ORDERS

EXCITEDLY JASON RUSHED DOWN THE SHIP'S GANGWAY

CAPTAIN CONDOR!
A SIGNAL FROM LONDON! WE'RE TO CHANGE COURSE FOR MEMFU, THE CAPITAL OF KRYPTO—IT'S RUMOURED THAT THEY'VE CAUGHT A WILD DYNOTROP. WE'RE TO DO OUR UTMOST TO GET THEM TO SELL IT TO US



CAPTAIN CONDOR STARED IN AMAZEMENT



A DYNOTROP! WHY, THAT'S JUST ABOUT THE RAREST MONSTER IN THE UNIVERSE. IN FACT MANY OF EARTH'S SCIENTISTS DECLARE IT'S EXTINCT. IT'D BE A TERRIFIC FEATHER IN OUR CAPS IF WE COULD TAKE ONE BACK ALIVE. WE'LL START FOR KRYPTO AT ONCE

THE SHIP WAS SOON RACING THROUGH SPACE, AND JASON EAGERLY DISCUSSED THE NEW MISSION WITH MIKE WHILE THEY LOOKED AFTER THE COLLECTION OF STRANGE BEASTS ON BOARD

EVEN IF THE DYNOTROP REALLY DOES EXIST, I DOUBT IF THE PEOPLE OF MEMFU WILL PART WITH IT



IT'S UP TO CAPTAIN CONDOR TO PERSUADE 'EM. HE'LL MANAGE IT ALL RIGHT. JUST YOU WAIT AND SEE!

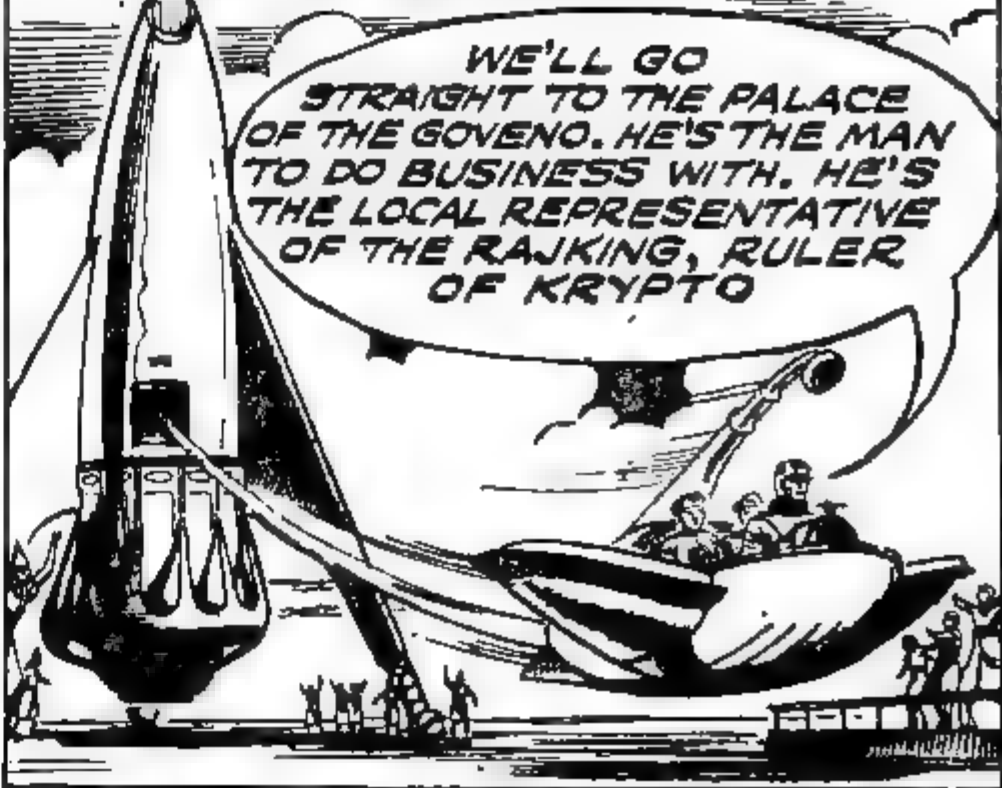


A FEW HOURS LATER CONDOR'S SPACE-SHIP WAS READY TO LAND AT MEMFU, A SEAPORT CITY ON THE SHORES OF KRYPTO'S PURPLE OCEAN



BE ON YOUR BEST BEHAVIOUR WHEN WE LAND, LADS. WE'VE GOT TO MAKE A GOOD IMPRESSION

THE ARRIVAL OF A SPACE-SHIP WAS A RARE EVENT ON KRYPTO. BY THE TIME CONDOR, JASON AND MIKE EMERGED IN A JET-CAR, A BIG CROWD HAD GATHERED



WE'LL GO STRAIGHT TO THE PALACE OF THE GOVENO. HE'S THE MAN TO DO BUSINESS WITH. HE'S THE LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RAKING, RULER OF KRYPTO

ON THE WAY TO THE PALACE, CONDOR SUDDENLY SAW A HUGE MONSTER IN A CAGE



BY THUNDER--
THAT'S THE VERY
ANIMAL WE'RE AFTER.
A DYNOTROP! SO THE
RUMOUR REALLY WAS
CORRECT!

GOSH! WHAT A
QUEER-LOOKING BRUTE!
IT'LL CAUSE SOME SENSATION
HOME ON EARTH--IF WE
CAN GET IT THERE!

BUT WHEN CONDOR EXPLAINED
HIS MISSION TO THE GOVENO --



I HAVE NO TIME TO
DISCUSS ANIMALS. CALAMITY
HAS STRUCK MEMFU! THIEVES
HAVE STOLEN THE EYES
FROM THE RAJKING'S
STATUE. MY GUARDS
HAVE SEARCHED
THE CITY IN
VAIN

SHAKING WITH FEAR, THE GOVENO
LED CONDOR TO THE PALACE
STEPS



THE RAJKING HIMSELF
IS EVEN NOW ON HIS WAY TO
PAY US A STATE VISIT. WHEN
HE LEARNS OF THIS THEFT HE
WILL BE FURIOUS. I SHALL BE
CAST INTO THE DEEPEST
DUNGEON!

GRIMLY CONDOR TURNED
TO JASON AND MIKE



THE STOLEN EYES
WERE MADE OF A RADIO-
ACTIVE MINERAL WHICH
SHINES IN THE DARK-- A
SYMBOL TO THE SUPERSTITIOUS
PEOPLE OF MEMFU THAT
THEIR RAJKING ALWAYS
WATCHES OVER THEM

ALL AT ONCE THE FAMOUS SPACE
CAPTAIN SWUNG ROUND TO THE
GOVENO



LISTEN! I THINK
I KNOW HOW WE MAY
RECOVER THE MISSING EYES
BEFORE THE RAJKING
ARRIVES

IS SUCH A
MIRACLE POSSIBLE?
BRING IT TO PASS
AND THE DYNOTROP
IS YOURS, EARTHMAN!

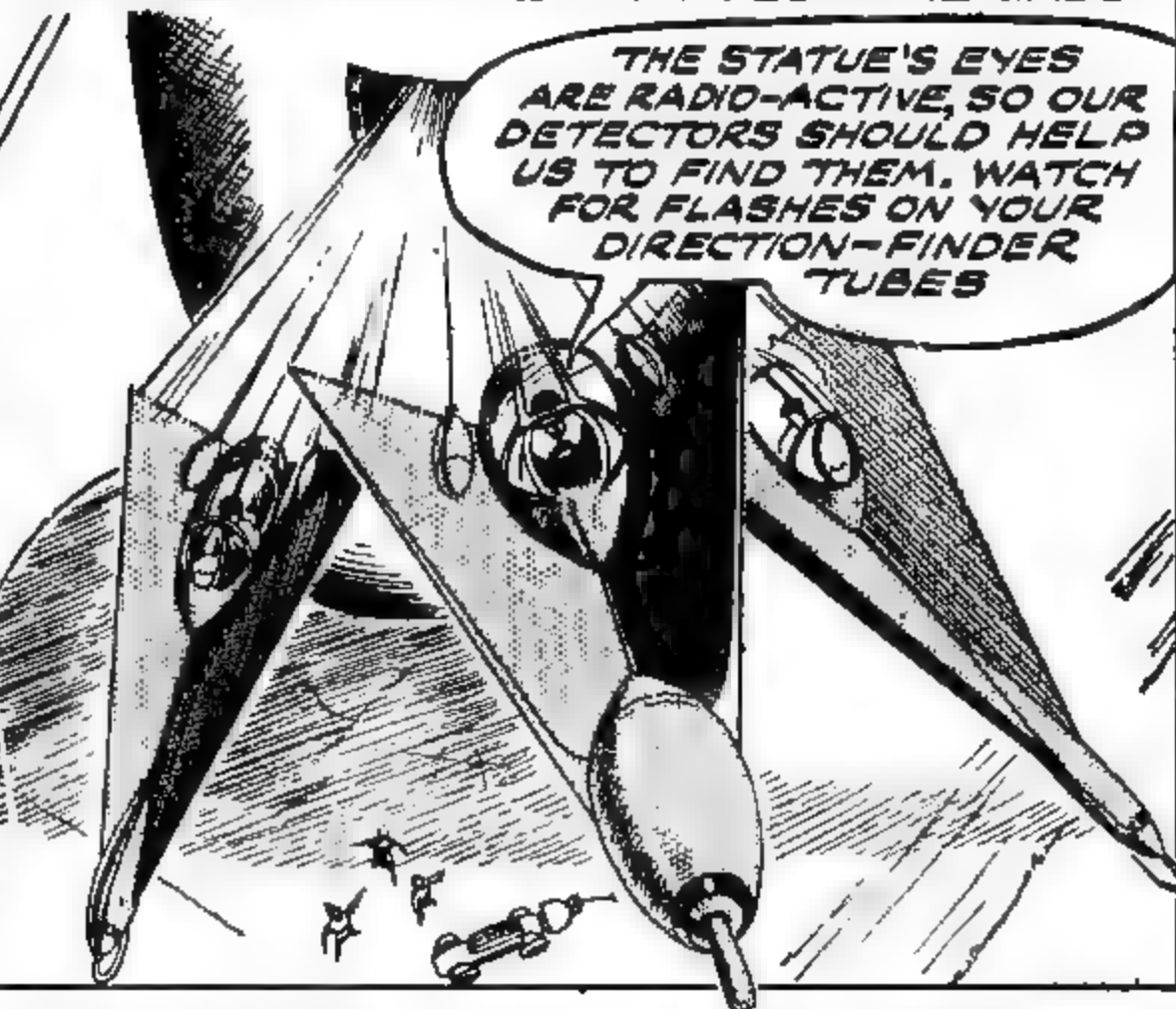
BUT THE COMMANDER OF THE GUARDS
SNEERED DISBELIEVINGLY



BUILD NO FALSE HOPES,
GOVENO. THE EARTHMAN PROMISES
THE IMPOSSIBLE. MY MEN HAVE
ALREADY SEARCHED THE CITY.
THE STATUE'S EYES HAVE
VANISHED FOR EVER

WE'LL
SEE ABOUT THAT.
COME ON, BOYS--
BACK TO THE
SHIP

A FEW MINUTES LATER CONDOR, JASON AND MIKE TOOK OFF IN THREE SPACE RUNABOUTS FITTED WITH LOOP AERIALS



THE STATUE'S EYES ARE RADIO-ACTIVE, SO OUR DETECTORS SHOULD HELP US TO FIND THEM. WATCH FOR FLASHES ON YOUR DIRECTION-FINDER TUBES

AS THE TRIO OF SEARCH SHIPS CIRCLED THE CITY, THE GUARD-COMMANDER'S EYES NARROWED WITH FEAR. THEN HE SPOKE IN A WHISPER TO THE KEEPER OF THE DYNOTROP



CONFOUND THE MEDDLING EARTHMAN! IF HE FINDS THE STATUE'S EYES IT WILL RUIN OUR PLAN TO DISGRACE THE GOVENO AND GET ME APPOINTED IN HIS PLACE

FEAR NOTHING. THE DYNOTROP WILL PRESERVE OUR SECRET!

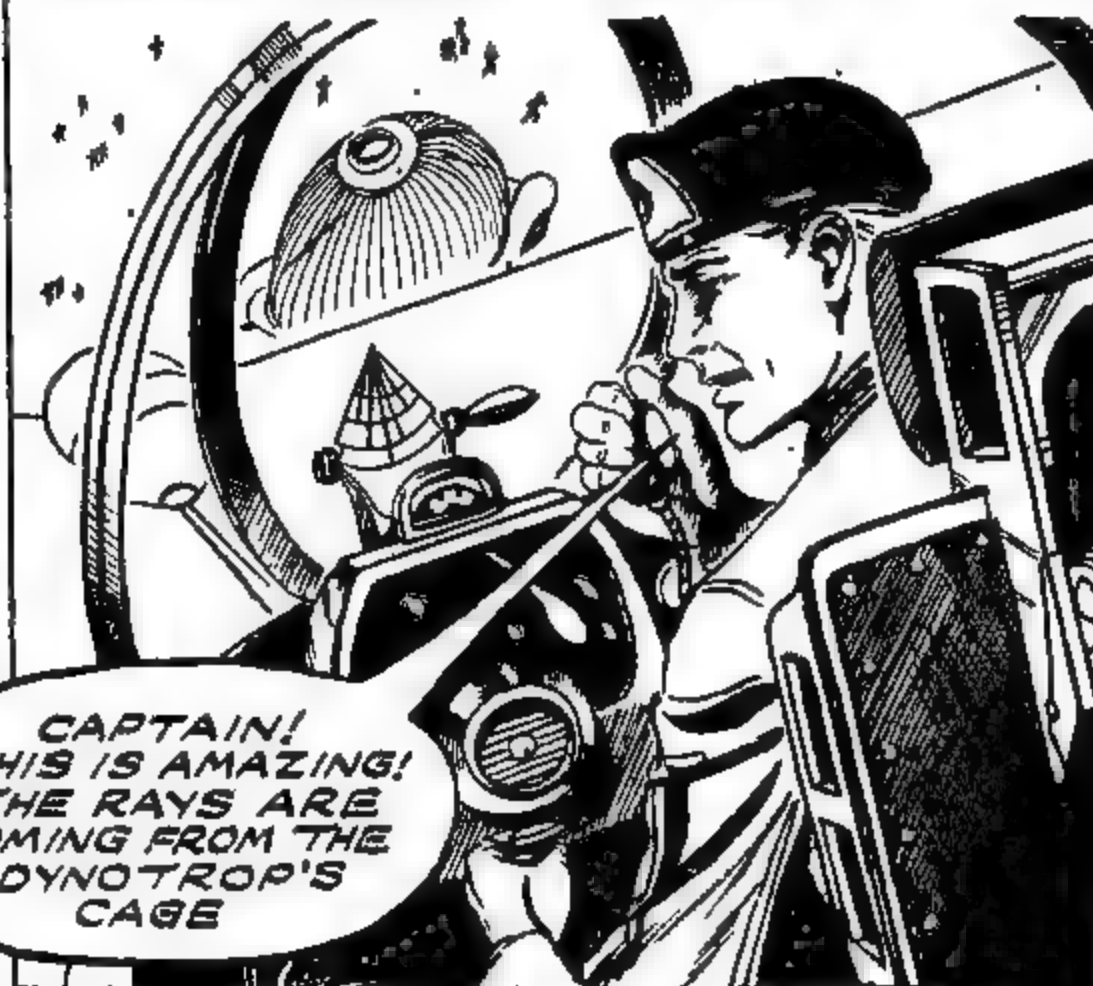
BUT BARELY FIVE MINUTES HAD PASSED WHEN JASON UTTERED A SHOUT



CAPTAIN CONDOR! I'M ON TO SOMETHING. THERE'S A SPECK ON MY SCREEN!

GOOD LAD. TRACK IT DOWN!

SKILFULLY JASON STEERED HIS LITTLE CRAFT UNTIL THE SIGNAL BECAME BIGGER. AND THEN --



CAPTAIN! THIS IS AMAZING! THE RAYS ARE COMING FROM THE DYNOTROP'S CAGE

CONDOR LANDED AND, HOLDING A STUN-GUN READY, BOLDLY APPROACHED THE CAGE

WHOEVER STOLE THE STATUE'S EYES HID THEM WHERE HE THOUGHT NO SEARCHER WOULD DARE LOOK. THEY MUST BE IN THIS CAGE - GUARDED BY THE DYNOTROP!



THE GOVENO GASPED A HOARSE PROTEST

EARTHMAN! DO NOT RISK YOUR LIFE IN THE CAGE. IT IS MADNESS!



DON'T WORRY. THE DYNOTROP IS CHAINED UP. I'LL KEEP OUT OF ITS REACH

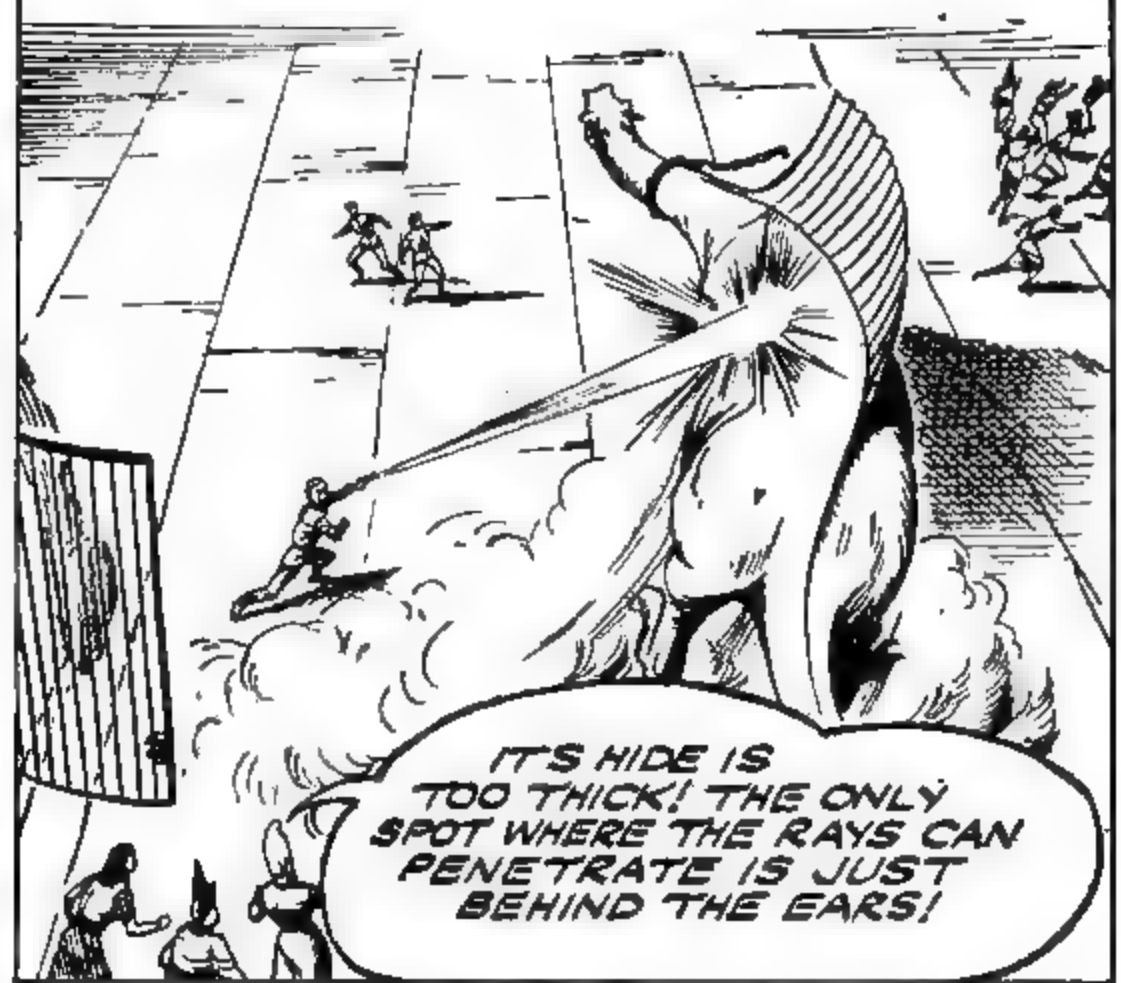
BUT CONDOR HAD UNDER-ESTIMATED THE STRENGTH OF THE GREAT BEAST. THE DYNOTROP GAVE A FRENZIED LEAP, AND--



THE CHAIN'S BROKEN! THE MONSTER'S ESCAPING

QUICK, SIR--USE YOUR STUN-GUN

THE FAMOUS SPACE CAPTAIN PRESSED THE TRIGGER, BUT--



IT'S HIDE IS TOO THICK! THE ONLY SPOT WHERE THE RAYS CAN PENETRATE IS JUST BEHIND THE EARS!

THE RAMPAGING BEAST SPREAD PANIC THROUGH THE CITY



THE DYNOTROP IS LOOSE! RUN! RUN FOR YOUR LIVES!

AMID THE CONFUSION, THE GOVENO HEARD THE CRY OF A LOOK-OUT RING FROM A PALACE WATCH-TOWER



HO, THERE! THE RAJING'S SHIP DRAWS IN SIGHT

THE RAJING! AND THE DYNOTROP IS LOOSE IN THE CITY! I-I SHALL SURELY BE EXECUTED FOR THIS!

THE GUARD COMMANDER WAS QUICK TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE SITUATION



CONDOR, THE EARTHMAN, IS TO BLAME FOR THIS DISASTER. ARREST HIM!

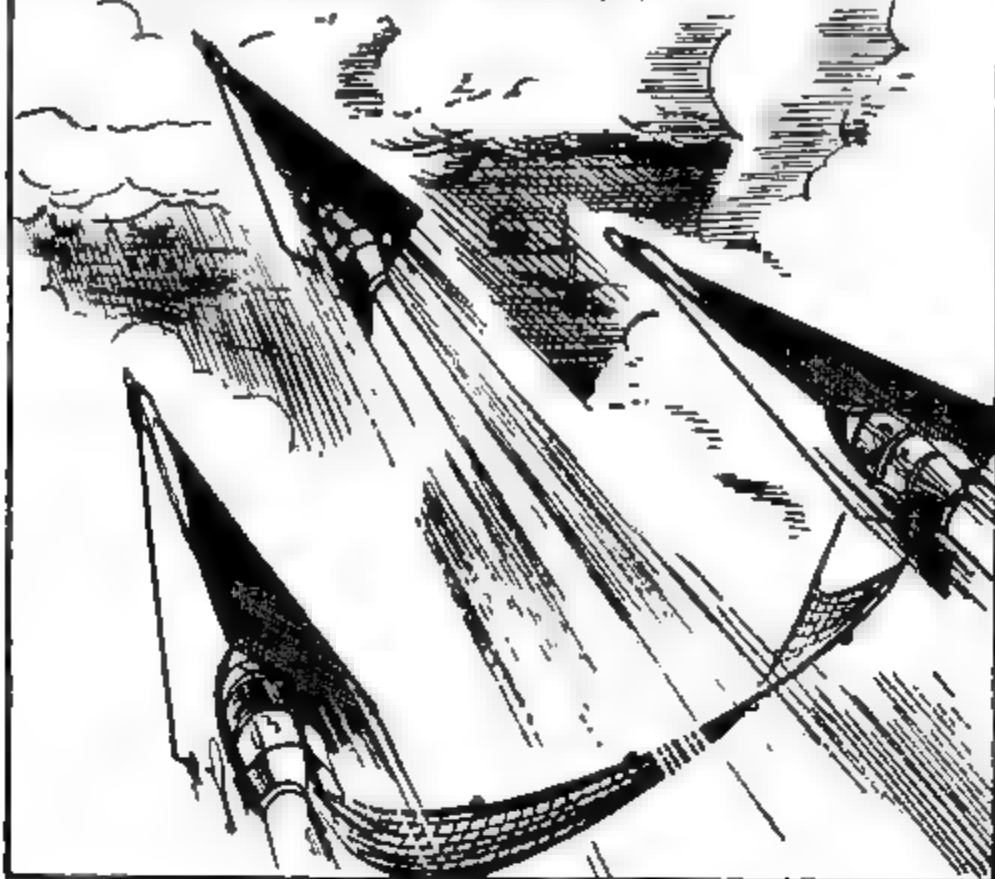
BUT THE GOVENO SWIFTLY INTERVENED



WAIT! I AM STILL THE GOVENO UNTIL THE RAJING DEPOSES ME. I STILL GIVE THE ORDERS. I BELIEVE THE EARTHMAN IS THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN SAVE US. WHAT SAYS HE?

THERE'S JUST ONE WAY WE CAN RECAPTURE THE MONSTER. JASON AND MIKE--FOLLOW ME BACK TO THE SHIP

WITHIN A FEW MINUTES THEY EMERGED ABOARD THEIR SPACE RUNABOUTS, AND NOW THE TWO PALS WERE TRAILING ONE OF THE EXPEDITION'S ANIMAL-CATCHING NETS BETWEEN THEM



DETERMINEDLY THEY ZOOMED OVER THE CITY, WHERE THE FRENZIED DYNOTROP WAS CREATING HAVOC

WE'VE GOT TO ACT FAST. THE RAJING WILL ARRIVE AT ANY MINUTE

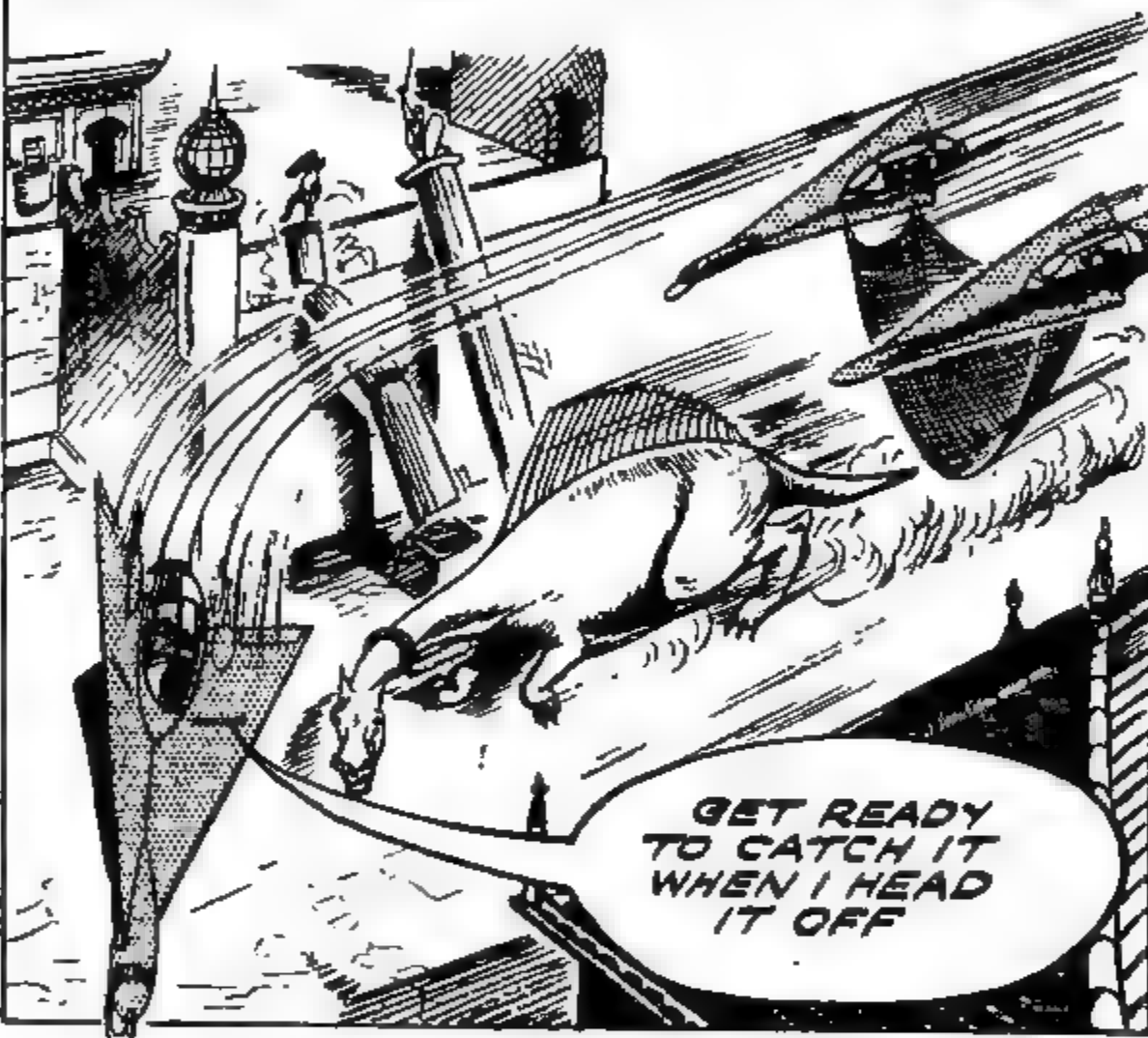


THE LOOK-OUT MAN GAVE AN URGENT CRY

HURRY! THE RAJING IS ENTERING THE HARBOUR!

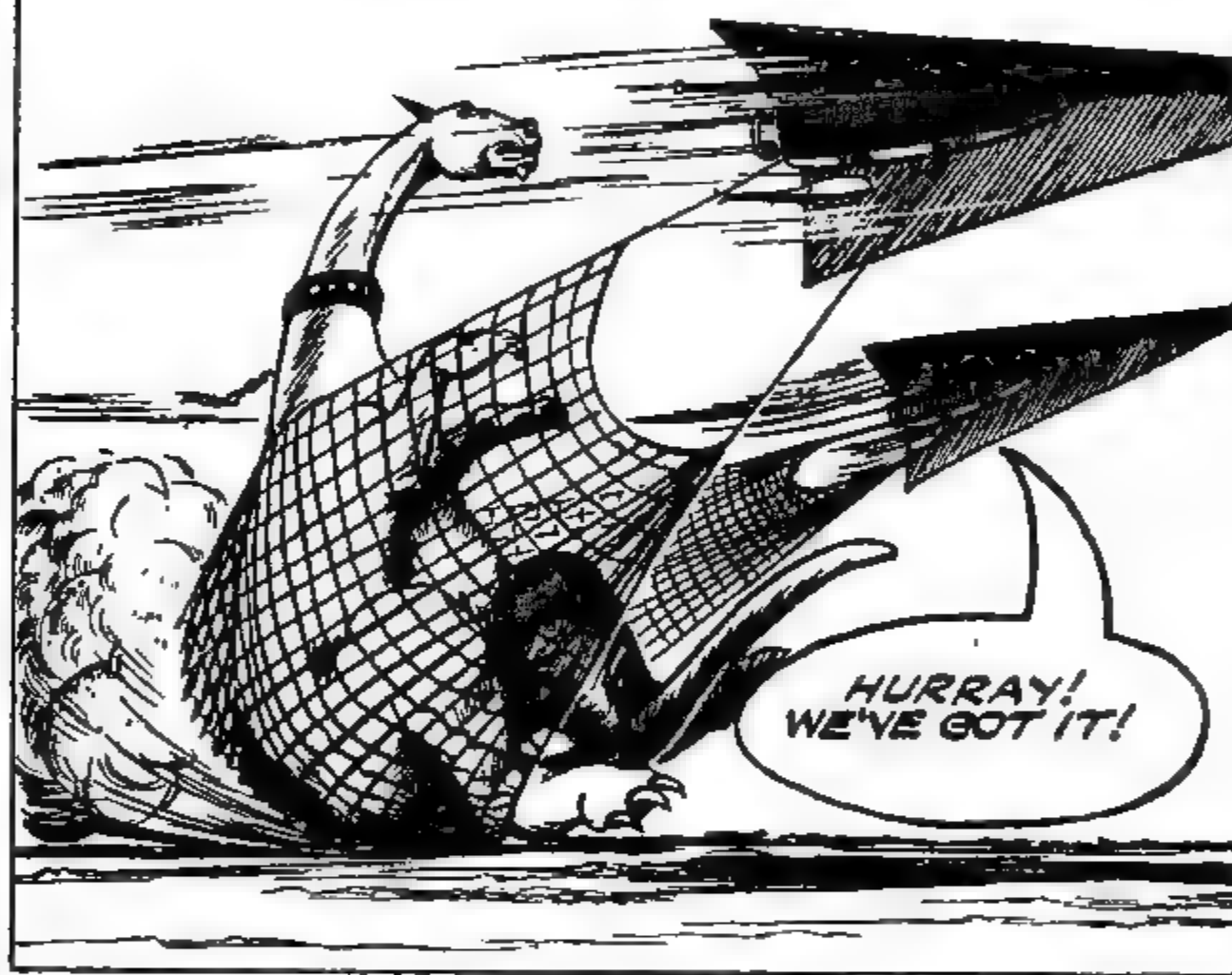


CONDOR MADE A FLASHING SWERVE



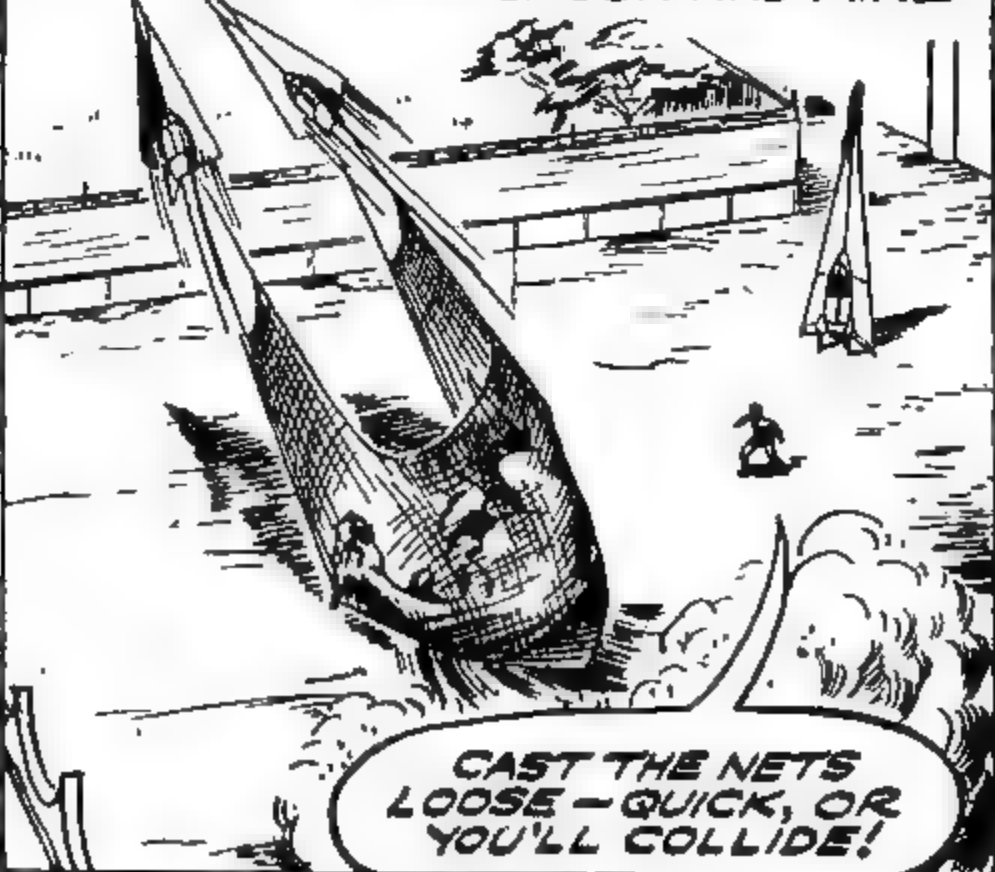
GET READY TO CATCH IT WHEN I HEAD IT OFF

DOWN SWOOPED JASON AND MIKE, AND—



HURRAY! WE'VE GOT IT!

AS CONDOR LANDED, HOWEVER, HE SAW THAT THE DYNOTROP'S FURIOUS STRUGGLES WERE MORE POWERFUL THAN THE ENGINES OF THE LITTLE SPACE-SHIPS. DESPERATELY HE LET OUT A YELL TO JASON AND MIKE



CAST THE NETS LOOSE—QUICK, OR YOU'LL COLLIDE!

THE INSTANT THE PALS OBEYED THE ORDER, CONDOR LEAPT ON TO THE BACK OF THE THRESHING MONSTER



THIS TIME I'LL STUN IT BY FIRING AT THAT SPOT BEHIND THE EARS

THE GUARD COMMANDER LEERED WITH FIENDISH SATISFACTION

THE MAD EARTHMAN WILL BE KILLED. THIS IS EVEN BETTER THAN WE PLANNED



CONDOR'S GUN FLASHED, AND THE AWESTRUCK WATCHERS SAW THE ANIMAL'S STRUGGLES ABRUPTLY CEASE AS ITS LEGS GAVE WAY

THE EARTHMAN HAS CONQUERED THE DYNOTROP

HE IS THE MIGHTIEST OF WARRIORS



HE HAS SAVED THE CITY FROM DESTRUCTION

CONDOR DARTED BACK TO HIS SPACE RUNABOUT AND RETURNED WITH A DETECTOR. THE HAND ON THE DIAL POINTED STRAIGHT TO THE NECK OF THE UNCONSCIOUS DYNOTROP, AND WITHIN FIVE SECONDS--

BY THUNDER! THE STATUE'S MISSING EYES ARE HERE-- FITTED INTO THE COLLAR!



ONLY ONE MAN HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO CARRY OUT THIS CRIME. IT WAS THE KEEPER OF THE DYNOTROP!



THE KEEPER STAGGERED BACK, TREMBLING WITH DISMAY

IT--IT IS TRUE! BUT I WAS FORCED TO DO IT BY THE GUARD COMMANDER. HE IS THE ONE WHO STOLE THE STATUE'S EYES!



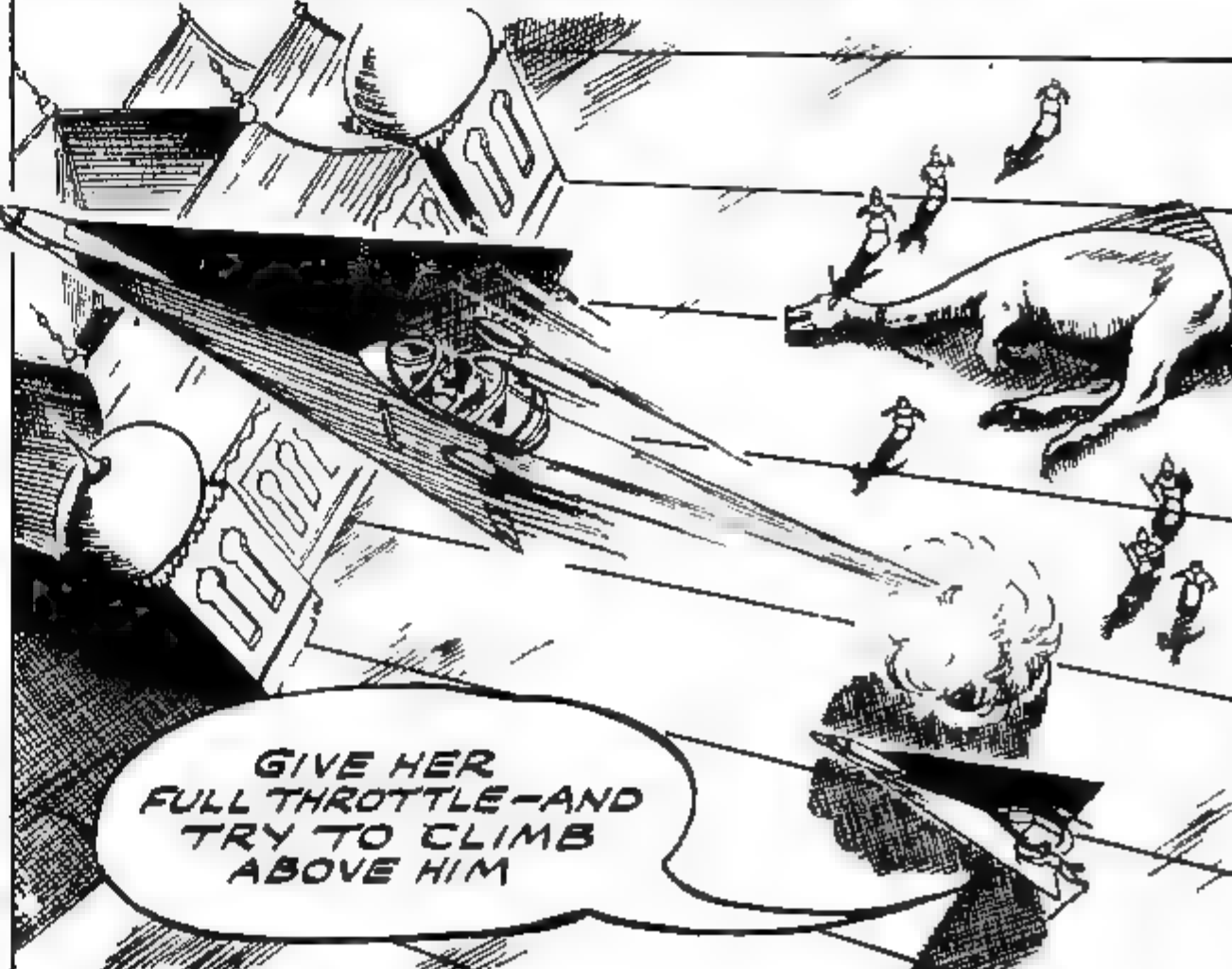
PANIC-STRICKEN, THE GUARD COMMANDER MADE A DASH FOR CONDOR'S MACHINE

AFTER HIM! DON'T LET HIM GET AWAY!

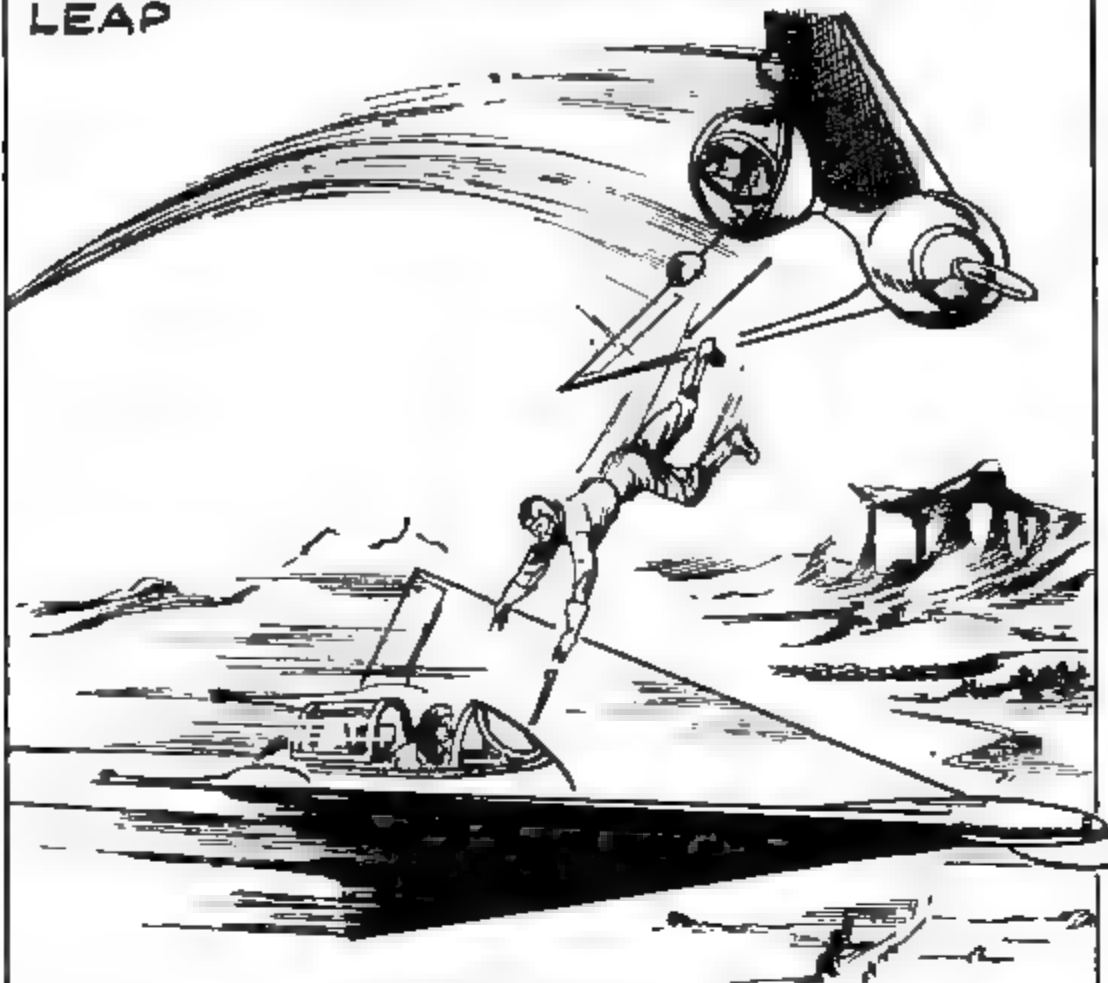


THE TERRIFIED TRAITOR LANCED INTO THE AIR WITH JASON IN PURSUIT AND CONDOR CLINGING TO ONE WING

GIVE HER FULL THROTTLE--AND TRY TO CLIMB ABOVE HIM



AS JASON SWIFT ABOVE THE FUGITIVE, THE FAMOUS SPACE CAPTAIN MADE A DEATH-DEFYING LEAP



GRASPING THE EDGE OF THE COCKPIT, CONDOR SWUNG A SLEDGE-HAMMER PUNCH



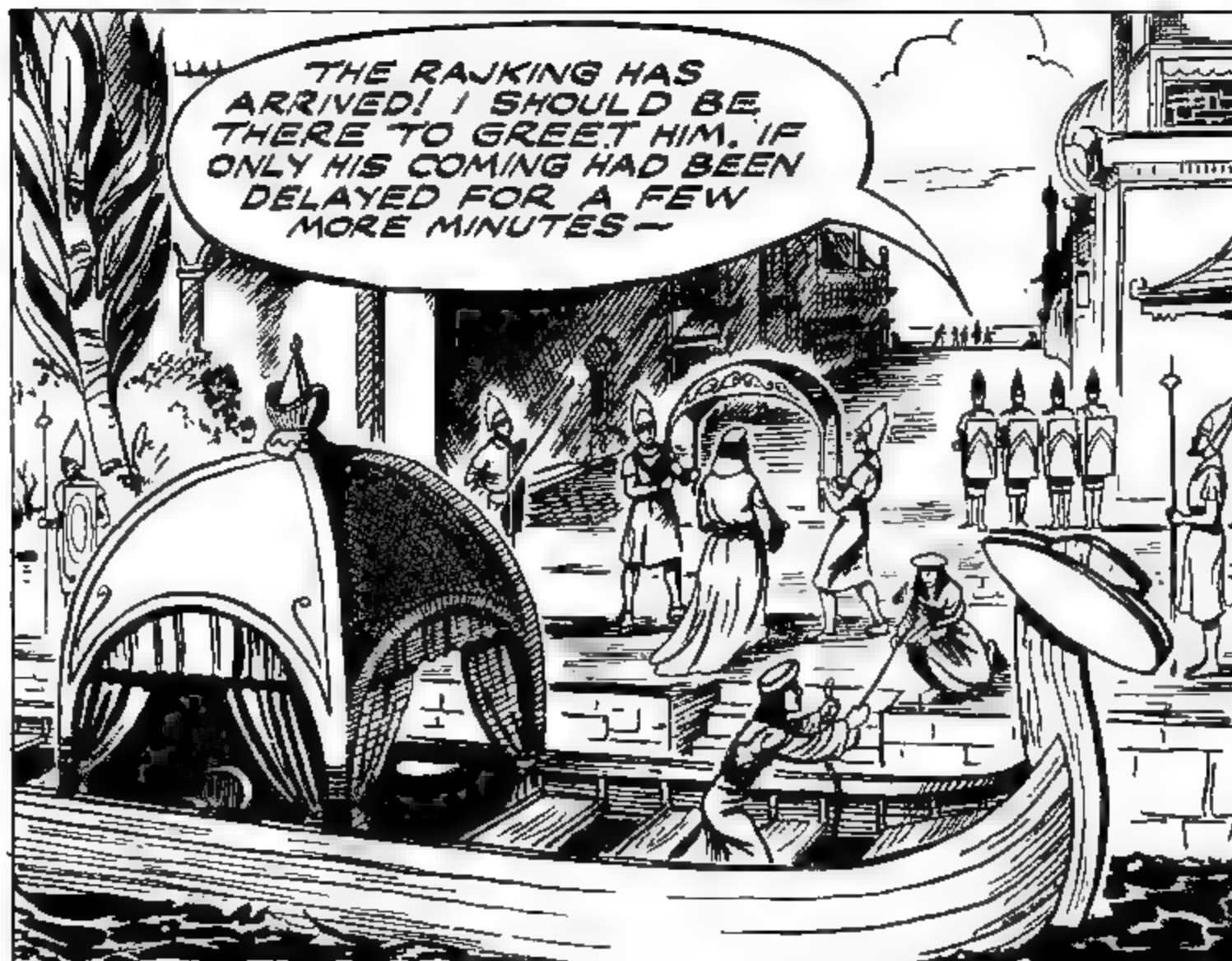
CAPTAIN CONDOR STEERED THE CRAFT BACK TO THE GROUND AND HANDED HIS CAPTIVE TO THE GUARD



GRATEFULLY THE GOVENERO SHOOK CONDOR BY THE HAND



JASON, HOWEVER, WAS STARING EXCITEDLY UP THE ROAD



IN A FLASH CONDOR TURNED TO THE CADETS



QUICK!
WE MAY NOT BE TOO
LATE. TAKE THESE EYES
AND REPLACE THEM
IN THE STATUE!

WHILE MIKE HOVERED ALONGSIDE, JASON
SPRANG NIMBLY ON TO THE STATUE'S
SHOULDERS



HURRY!
THE RAJING'S
RETINUE HAS STARTED
TO MOVE THIS WAY



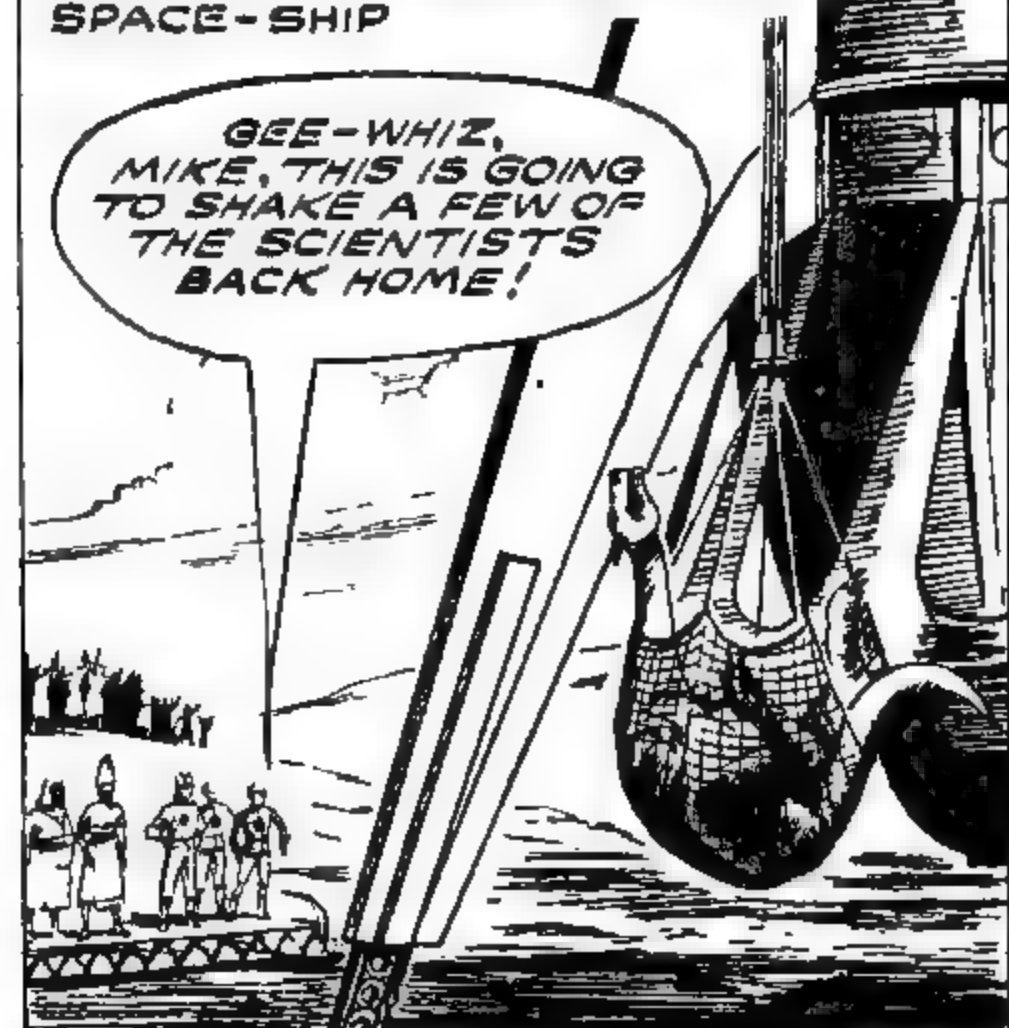
WE'VE MADE IT!
THE EYES ARE BACK
WHERE THEY
BELONG

THE PALS RETURNED JUST AS THE
GOVENO FINISHED EXPLAINING THE
SITUATION TO THE RAJING, WHO NOW
TURNED TO CONDOR WITH A ROYAL
GESTURE



MIGHTY EARTHMAN,
MY REALM IS DEEPLY IN YOUR
DEBT FOR UNMASKING A TRAITOR.
I COMMAND YOU TO ACCEPT THE
DYNOTROP AS A GIFT

AND SO, AMID DEAFENING CHEERS,
THE STILL-STUNNED DYNOTROP
WAS HAULED ABOARD THE
SPACE-SHIP



GEE-WHIZ,
MIKE, THIS IS GOING
TO SHAKE A FEW OF
THE SCIENTISTS
BACK HOME!

AND MIKE WAS RIGHT. FOR A FEW WEEKS LATER,
WHEN THE SPACE-SHIP REACHED EARTH AND
UNLOADED ITS CARGO -



GOOD GRACIOUS!
I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE
MY EYES. THEY REALLY
HAVE BROUGHT BACK
A DYNOTROP

AND MOST
OF US THOUGHT IT
WAS EXTINCT! WELL
DONE, CAPTAIN
CONDOR!

THE END.

**MR. X'S
AMAZING
QUEST FOR**

PIRATE GOLD

BY
EDWIN
DALE



THE MENACE OF THE DEEP!

I'M known as "Mr. X" to conceal my identity, because I specialise in tackling all kinds of jobs where secrecy and security are absolutely essential.

The adventure I'm going to relate to you now started when I visited my friend, Count d'Agnon, who lived in a great castle on a rocky cliff-top on the island of Carribo, in the South Atlantic.

"The position is this, Mr. X," he said, as we sat in his study. "The d'Agnon fortunes have dwindled year by year until the family is now nearly broke! We owe a very large sum of money to an American bank. And unless I can promise, within twenty-four hours, that the loan can be paid back quite quickly, this castle and all its contents will have to be sold!"

The Count's voice shook with emotion. I well knew what a blow it would be to him to lose the home in which he had lived all his life.

"And you think I can help?" I asked.

"That's why I invited you here," he replied.

"Our only hope is that you can recover for us the priceless collection of gold plate which was stolen from this castle by pirates, hundreds of years ago."

He passed over to me a piece of ancient parchment, which he had taken from his safe.

On it was written the following verse, in the crude handwriting of some long-dead buccaneer:—

*"Sealed in ye golden cuppe full twenty fathoms five
Ye secret of ye d'Agnon treasure lies.*

Below a wheel that ne'er shall turn again

It slumbers in its bed beneath the main

Locking a fortune from the sight of human eyes."

The Count explained that on the day after the pirates' raid, this parchment had been washed ashore in a tightly-corked flagon. It was believed that the pirates' ship had gone to the bottom during a storm somewhere in the wide expanse of d'Agnon Bay.

"So what we've to do," I said, "is to try to locate the wreck and find the golden cup."

"Exactly," nodded the Count. "Many people

The Riddle of the Tattooed Man Who Lurked in the Bay of Wrecked Ships

have tried throughout the years. But there are so many wrecks in the bay that no one has been able to succeed so far."

I rose to my feet.

"Very well," I snapped. "As we've only twenty-four hours available, we'll get weaving straight away."

Within a few minutes we were moving across the bay in the Count's cabin-cruiser. Accompanying us was the Count's son, Marcel, a strapping youth.

From the chart in the nearby coastguard station, Marcel had already noted which parts of the bay had a depth of approximately "twenty fathoms five"—that is, 150 feet.

But it was as we approached the first one, that I saw a lot of bubbles floating up to the surface.

Instantly I became filled with suspicion!

The only clothes that I was wearing, in that broiling heat, were a pair of khaki shorts, and deck shoes. I kicked the shoes from my feet, and took a header into the cool bay.

I knew that without free-diving equipment I couldn't hope to dive 150-feet to the bottom of the bay, but the water was almost crystal clear, and I was hoping that I would be able to go down deep enough to find out if my guess about the origin of those bubbles was true or not.

I must have been nearly thirty feet beneath the surface, when suddenly I saw that my guess had been an accurate one. Hovering in the water, right below me, I saw a fish-like figure, clad in swim-trunks, underwater goggles, aqualung, and green flippers.

It was a man wearing a free-diving aqualung outfit, and the bubbles which I had seen were streaming regularly out from the escape vent, alongside his face-mask. But I had only a second to watch!

The next moment I saw a vague shape, gliding through the water towards me.

The greenish light gleamed on something bright. My first thought was that it was murderous teeth, glinting from the gaping jaws of an attacking shark. Then, in the uncertain light, I saw that I was wrong.

It was a second aqualung swimmer. And this time coming straight at me, with a murderous-looking double edged knife clasped in one clenched fist!

Even as I glimpsed my assailant, the man swung his knife at me in a vicious arc. I dived swiftly beneath it, shot my right hand up, and clamped it tightly home upon the sinewy wrist beyond the dagger.

Underwater, an attack can be carried out swiftly and silently. No faint betraying sound can warn the victim. My attacker had got within three yards before I saw him for the first time!

Had I not chanced to turn at that moment the

murderous dagger would have been plunged to its hilt between my shoulder blades.

For a moment now we grappled together in the depths. Then, inch by inch, I managed to press the point of the knife away from my body. As I did so, I saw that on his arm was tattooed a coiled snake.

The eyes of that tattooed snake gleamed mockingly up at me as I struggled for life. With my right hand fully occupied keeping that deadly dagger at bay, this underwater fight against a man equipped with breathing apparatus could only end one way.

My lungs already felt as if they were bursting.

My one hope to even up the fight would be to tear his breathing-tube from his mouth. Then he too would have to make for the surface.

I groped blindly for it with my left hand. But he twisted away like an eel and my fingers only brushed against it. And then my underwater enemy got his left hand beneath my chin, and I felt his fingers close upon my throat in a grip of iron.

This was surely the end! The natural instinct, with those fingers clamped around my wind-pipe, was to relax my jaw muscles, and I had to use all the will-power that I possessed to keep my lips tightly sealed.

As we threshed in the water, a red mist began floating before my eyes. I felt the strength seeping from my limbs. My fingers were relaxing their grip upon his knife-wrist. Within seconds now I would be at the under-water killer's mercy.

Summoning the last of my failing strength I brought my bent knee up beneath me, and drove it hard into my assailant's chest.

Shaken by the impact his grip on my throat slackened for a second. But it was no good. At that moment I felt the last of my strength sapping from me. With blood pounding in my ears I was too weak to take advantage of it.

My lungs had reached bursting point. A pressure from within me seemed to tear my lips apart, and I felt the first choking gulp of salt water forcing its way down my throat.

Now I knew that I would never again be able to reach the surface, unaided. But whilst there was life, there was still hope. I clamped my mouth tightly closed again and began a feeble battle for life.

And then, through the thickly gathering red mist in front of my eyes I saw a hefty figure, in aqualung equipment, snaking down through the water towards me, grasping an underwater harpoon.

It was Marcel d'Agnon, the Count's son, who had accompanied us in the cabin-cruiser.

My underwater assailant had seen him, too. He jerked his dagger wrist from my right hand, lunged at me with the deadly weapon. With one last effort I twisted sideways—and the thrust missed.

Turning quickly he swam swiftly away, as Marcel reached me and worked his arms beneath my armpits.

I felt myself being borne swiftly upwards, and then the thunder in my brain seemed to explode in a brilliant flash of fire, and I remembered no more.

FISHING—WITH A "MIKE"

WHEN I became conscious again, it was to find myself lying face downwards on the deck of the cabin-cruiser with Count d'Agnon and Marcel taking turns in straddling my back, and applying vigorous artificial respiration to pump the sea water out of my lungs.

"Okay, you can take a rest now, both of you!" I managed to pant. "I'm back again in the land of the living—thanks to you, Marcel!"

The youth smiled happily down at me.

"When I see you dive into the bay, Mr. X," he said. "I quickly put on my aqualung equipment, and follow you, because I think to myself that you will perhaps need some help!"

"And you were certainly right!" I said. "Hallo, we're back home, are we?"

I had suddenly realised that the Count's boat was now moored to the quay-side in the little harbour beneath Castle d'Agnon. Evidently father and son had been fighting to save my life for the past half-hour or more. It had been an even closer thing for me than I had thought.

Suddenly full recollection flashed back to my brain!

"That spot out in the bay, where I dived overboard!" I cried anxiously. "Have you got it marked accurately on your chart? I feel sure that the pirate ship, and the golden cup are down there!"

The Count quickly reassured me with a smile and a nod of his head.

"I have marked the spot very carefully, Mr. X," he said. "My crew brought the cabin-cruiser back to port, whilst we were attending to you. As soon as you get to the castle, and can rest, I will make arrangements to send divers down."

"Wait a minute!" I interrupted him, thinking of my own narrow escape from death. "It may not be as easy as that! In less than an hour I'll be fit to go down there again—this time, wearing aqualung equipment, and more ready for trouble—I!"

But the rest of my words froze upon my lips. From along the deck came a familiar sound.

Flip . . . flop! Flip . . . flop!

It was the sound of rubber flippers.

Too late I leaped to my feet. Disappearing over the side was a figure in free-diving kit. And, on his arm was—the sinister tattooed shape of a coiled snake. It was my underwater attacker!

The wet marks left by his flippers led across the deck to the wheel-house, and then back again—and

in one of his hands I glimpsed the chart upon which Count d'Agnon had marked the twenty-five fathoms sounding.

With a cry, Marcel leaped towards the side, clutching at the mysterious figure. But, it was no good. The man slid into the water, just in time!

"It's too late, Marcel—it wouldn't do any good!" I said. "You'd be at the mercy of his knife, like I was, if you go after him without breathing apparatus. By the time you've got into aqualung equipment, he'll be well away across the bay!"

The three of us stared at each other in glum dismay. Without that marking on the chart, it might take us ages to find the exact spot where I had been attacked.

Still feeling groggy, I accompanied the Count and Marcel back to the castle.

Marcel followed me glumly into my bedroom overlooking the bay.

"Is there nothing that we can do?" he demanded. "Does this mean that we are beaten, Mr. X?"

"Far from it, Marcel!" I retorted. "It is still two hours to nightfall. The men who are out to steal your father's treasure have undoubtedly located the pirate ship, but they can't be hoping to get the golden cup from it, until it is daylight again tomorrow. Otherwise the Tattooed Man would not have gone to the trouble of following your father's boat here, to steal your father's chart. We've got one big thing to work on—that snake tattoo on his arm!"

It was the height of the holiday season, and Carribo is a popular resort for swimming, sun-bathing, surf-riding and deep-sea and longshore fishing. From my bedroom window I could now see a wide expanse of beach crowded with holiday-makers in swim-trunks. Around the harbour, the walls were lined with in-shore fishermen, stripped to the waist in the fierce heat of the sun. Aboard high-powered fishing craft, now mooring up for the night, scarcely a shirt or a vest was being worn by the men on the decks.

"Aqualung treasure-hunters can only work by daylight," I continued. "I've got a hunch that the Tattooed Man's gang are working from a fishing-boat, which they hide in some cover during the day to use as their operational base, and come back to the town for mooring at night. I want you, Marcel, to walk the length of that beach, and along the harbour walls. Keep your eyes skinned for a man with a coiled snake tattooed on his right forearm. If you spot him, come back and tell me. Try nothing on your own—remember, he's a killer!"

I got to work myself with powerful field-glasses at my bedroom window—but without any luck. Gradually, darkness fell, and the beach emptied.

And then fresh trouble descended like a bombshell upon the Count d'Agnon and myself. We waited

all through the night, but Marcel failed to return from the mission on which I had sent him. What did it mean?

Had he spotted the man with the tattooed forearm—and failed to obey my order that, on finding him, he should return straight to me?

There was nothing that I could do about it during the hours of darkness. But, at the break of dawn—the dawn of the last day for saving Castle d'Agnon from being sold to repay the bank—I was preparing to start my search for the Tattooed Man, and for Marcel d'Agnon!

It had been a sweltering night, and already everybody on the beach and esplanade, and on the pleasure fishing-boats, were stripped to the waist.

Before setting out I swept my powerful glasses over them from my bedroom window. Suddenly I checked the glasses, and focussed them on a diesel-engined motor boat, the "Sea Spray," which looked to be preparing for a day's tunny fishing.

"Strange!" I muttered. "What could be the reason for that?"

One of the three men upon that boat, preparing it for the open sea, was wearing a thick blue sweater—despite the oppressive heat of the morning. One question throbbed in my mind. Was it to hide a tattooed snake upon his forearm?

I made a swift change of plans. When I left the Castle d'Agnon, a short while later, by a back entrance facing inland, I was wearing a broad brimmed hat adorned with "trout flies," and a pair of dark glasses. I also wore a neat, false beard. Over my shoulder I carried a bulging fishing-bag, borrowed from the Count. Under one arm I held a folding stool, and under the other, a very special fishing rod, of my own design and invention!

I made my way, with the eager hobble of an aged enthusiast, down the harbour wall. Then, staring critically down into the seaweed-strewn sea, I opened my camp-stool opposite the "Sea Spray." Settling down upon it, I began preparing my very "special bait" on the end of my line.

It consisted of a small microphone, hidden behind a large piece of raw fish, with my fishing-line a pair of thin wires, leading up to a tiny speaker inside my hat.

The deck of the "Sea Spray" was now empty, and an appetising smell, coming from the cabin, told that the three men, whom I had seen from the Castle, were now having an early breakfast before putting to sea. I even caught a glimpse of a blue-sweater through the cabin porthole. Despite the stifling heat of the cabin, he was still wearing it!

Pretending to concentrate my attention upon a tangled reel, I dangled my "bait" level with the open porthole. My luck was in. I had immediate results. The voice of the sweated man came clearly through.

"Well, that's breakfast over, so let's get going!" he was saying. "By 10 o'clock we should get finished with the work with the underwater hacksaw—and then we'll be able to say goodbye for ever to the Sib—"

"Ssssh!" interrupted somebody in the cabin. "Watch your tongue, Carl! Haven't we all agreed to never mention that pirate ship by name?"

That interruption had stopped me from learning something which I badly wanted to know. But I was well satisfied with the lucky break that had come my way through that hunch about the blue sweater. Undoubtedly it was being worn to hide a snake tattoo on its owner's forearm.

My fishing was over for the day. I had found out all I wanted.

Now I began to wonder if I could make a rapid change from a fisherman to a stowaway? It would be taking a big chance? But if they were planning to unearth the gold cup from the pirate shipwreck at 10 o'clock, then somehow I had got to be there or failing that, spike their plan!

THE TATTOOED MAN AT BAY

TWENTY minutes later the "Sea Spray" was speeding away across the bay. And I was aboard her, concealed beneath a ship's dinghy, lashed upside-down across the deck.

I had discarded my "old fisherman" disguise, and fishing gear, and I had darted aboard the launch unseen, whilst the three crooks had been preparing to cast-off.

They were now clustered together in the wheel-house, heading the launch for a stretch of rocky coast forming the other side of the bay—undoubtedly making for some cove where they could leave the ship, whilst they swam out underwater to the pirate's sunken ship.

I hadn't made any definite plans yet. How could I? The chief thing that I wanted to do now was to locate that pirate ship. I was hoping that after the launch had been abandoned I would be able to find a spare aqualung outfit aboard it, and get into it quickly enough to enable me to follow the three out to the pirate ship.

Then, to my surprise, and no little dismay, the "Sea Spray's" engine was suddenly stopped, half-a-mile from the lonely coast.

"Okay, we'll get our prisoner ashore now!" I heard the tattooed man say. "You two, get the dinghy launched. I'll row him out to that empty stretch of coast, and leave him there among the rocks. It'll be hours before anyone finds him and, by that time, we'll have the loot aboard the "Sea Spray" and be heading across the sea for South America!"

He turned into the wheel-house, whilst the other two men, climbing up on to the deck, approached my hiding-place.

The moment that they moved the dinghy I would be seen. This was a turn of events on which I hadn't bargained. Luck wasn't going with me in this adventure. This might ruin everything for me. Now I would have to put up a fight—with the location of the sunken pirate ship still unknown to me. And today that gold cup had to go to Castle d'Agnon or else!

I grabbed my automatic from its arm-pit holster. As the two men stooped to lift the dinghy, I leapt to my feet.

"Get your hands up—and stand quite still!" I shouted. "And that applies to you in the wheel-house, too!"

The men on the deck to each side of me staggered back, with arms raised. But the tattooed man in the wheel-house turned swiftly round from a locker, which he had just opened.

I gave a gasp of dismay. Now he was holding before him, like a shield, the "Sea Spray's" prisoner, gagged and securely roped, hand and foot.

It was Marcel! Undoubtedly, in his search last night, the Count's son had found the Tattooed Man! If only he had obeyed my orders, and had returned straight to the Castle d'Agnon to tell me this! But it was too late now to pine about "what should have been!"

The Tattooed Man came slowly forward out of the wheel-house, carefully holding the youth before him, as a human shield.

"So you've turned up again, eh?" he leered. "I'd have thought that you would have had enough, after our brief underwater encounter last night. Well, why don't you shoot, Mr. X?"

"Harm that youngster, and I'll put a bullet through you!" I rapped, fiercely. "Let go of him, at once!"

"I intend to—well, almost at once!" jeered the Tattooed Man.

Keeping Marcel between himself and the muzzle of my automatic, he dragged him, walking sideways, to the launch's side. Then, with a sudden twist of his body, he pushed Marcel outboard, until the youngster was leaning right out in space over the launch's side. I could shoot the Tattooed Man now—but, if I did, the bound youth would drop like a stone into the sea.

Even as I watched, from the corner of my eye, I saw the evil fin of a large killer shark circling the launch, in search of a meal!

Suddenly, to my horror, the Tattooed Man released his hold upon the Count's son. Marcel toppled into the sea, with scarcely a splash.

"Now you've got a decision to make, Mr. X—quickly!" jeered the Tattooed Man. "Which would the Count sooner have you save for him—his lost treasure, or his son?"

I could have dropped the ruthless crook there and

then with a bullet, but there was no time. Letting my automatic fall from my hand, I dashed across the deck, and made a lightning dive into the sea.

Marcel was sinking like a stone. The shark had seen him, and had turned to attack.

I was unarmed, but suddenly I remembered that a shark can sometimes be frightened off by swimming straight towards it. I squirmed round in the water. Steeling myself, I swam straight to meet the twelve-foot steel-grey shape, blowing a stream of bubbles from my mouth.

Two rows of gleaming evil teeth flashed in the water barely three feet from me, and then the shark turned suddenly, and beat a hasty retreat. It had worked.

I dived after the sinking form again. Yesterday Marcel had saved me from drowning, now it was my turn to save him from a watery grave.

Overtaking him, I grabbed hold of his shoulders and struck out for the surface. Reaching it, I tore the gag from his mouth, and watched him gratefully suck in life-giving air.

The launch had now left us to our fate. Rolling over on to my back, I headed for the shore.

Half-an-hour later I was dragging Marcel up on to a sandy beach, and was untying the tight ropes from around his wrists and ankles.

"I've ruined everything, haven't I, Mr. X?" Marcel said, bitterly.

"No, you haven't, Marcel!" I said, with a sudden feeling of excitement. "I've just thought of something! I think we can still find that sunken pirate ship in time to save the gold cup!"

When the Tattooed Man, during breakfast on the crook's launch, had started to say the name of the pirate ship, the little that he had said of it had somehow seemed to ring a bell with me. Now I knew the reason why!

I hurried Marcel back to the Castle, and unrolled, once again, the pirate's ancient parchment.

"Yes, that's it!" I cried excitedly. "The first letter in each line of this rhyme spells the name of the pirates' ship. S-y-b-i-l. Sybil!"

Taking the Count's car, I rushed down to the Coastguard Station in the town. In the course of time, every wreck in the huge bay had been explored by divers, and, where possible, its name had been ascertained, and marked upon a large-scale chart of the bay.

And one of those located wrecks was a ship called "Sybil!"

Half-an-hour later, Marcel and I, wearing swim-trunks and complete aqualung equipment of the most modern kind, dropped silently down into the sea from the deck of the Count's cabin-cruiser. She was drifting, with engine silent, above a sounding of "full twenty fathoms five." The Coast guards' bearing, upon the ancient wreck of a

sailing ship named "Sybil," had brought us back to the very spot that had been the scene of my hair-raising underwater adventure the day before.

Now I was out to level up the score in my fight with the Tattooed Man for possession of the gold cup. Marcel had insisted upon accompanying me. And, as the youngster had proved himself a useful ally during the past twenty-four hours, I had raised no objection.

The special valves fitted to our compressed air cylinders automatically regulated the supply of air through our breathing-tubes, to conform with the change of water pressure, as we went down . . . down . . . down towards the bottom of the bay.

Suddenly Marcel tapped my arm, and pointed excitedly ahead!

There below us, was the wreck of the pirate sailing ship. Its broken masts were tilted grotesquely and its hulk was draped with seaweed, and cemented to the bottom of the bay by concrete-hard corals.

There was plenty of life down there. Minutely small, medium-sized, and monster multi-coloured fish of a score of different species, darted ceaselessly in and out of that ever swaying, underwater jungle.

Suddenly, as if at a given signal, the fish formed themselves into close-packed shoals, which zig-zagged in a movement of mass alarm, away from the sunken wreck. In a matter of moments, the water above the pirate ship was clear of all except an occasional darting fish!

And then we saw the reason why. Suddenly from out of the centre of the wreck came two aqualung-swimmers—with the leader of the pair grasping a magnificent gold cup.

Marcel and I exchanged swift glances through our goggles. I made a swift signal to indicate to him that the underwater fugitives' most vulnerable point was the breathing-tubes leading from their cylinders to their face-masks. And then we set off after them!

It was the Tattooed Man who had got the cup. Shooting past his confederate, leaving him for Marcel to tackle, I overtook the underwater "killer" silently and remorselessly, and then grabbed him by one ankle.

He swung round in the water in an action of violent surprise. The cup dropped from his hand, and began sinking towards the bottom of the bay. He struck out viciously.

But this time I was too quick for him. I grasped his breathing tube and ripped it from his mouth, and then severed it with a slash of my knife.

Streaming bubbles, he shot up towards the surface. I turned swiftly ready to give Marcel a helping hand. But my help wasn't needed.

Marcel, too, had a debt to repay. He had dealt with the other underwater crook almost as quickly, and just as effectively, as I had settled accounts with the Tattooed Man. Now he was looking towards me, waving a severed breathing-tube triumphantly above his head.

I retrieved the cup, and then we followed the twin stream of bubbles up to the surface of the bay. When we reached it the Tattooed Man and his confederate were being picked up by a coastguard cutter, which had followed us out from the shore. The two crooks, realising that they were the losers in the high-priced "Battle for the Cup," were sullenly confessing where the "Sea Spray" was to be found, with their third accomplice waiting aboard her.

A short while later, on the deck of the Count's boat, we discovered that the base of the gold cup could be unscrewed. And there, within a watertight compartment, we found an old map, yellow with age, which showed clearly the spot on the island where the pirates had buried their loot, hundreds of years ago.

That night the d'Agnon Gold Plate Collection, newly polished and dancing with fire from the reflection of a dozen golden candelabras, decorated the long table in the banqueting hall of Castle d'Agnon at a feast to celebrate the last-minute recovery of the "d'Agnon treasure." The treasure had proved much bigger than expected, and only a small part would be needed to repay the bank.

Reflected, too, in that old gold were the happy, smiling faces of Count d'Agnon and his son, Marcel.

Together they raised gold goblets towards me—to drink the first toast that had been drunk from those vessels for hundreds of years.

"To Mr. X!" cried the Count. "The man who has saved our home and fortune—the greatest friend we have ever known!"

"And the happiest!" I chimed in. And I meant it!

THE END



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| 32. SPERM WHALE | 42. HIPPO-POTAMUS |
| 33. GIANT SQUID | 43. GANNET |
| | 44. COELACANTH |

(Turn to page 18 for interesting facts about these creatures)

